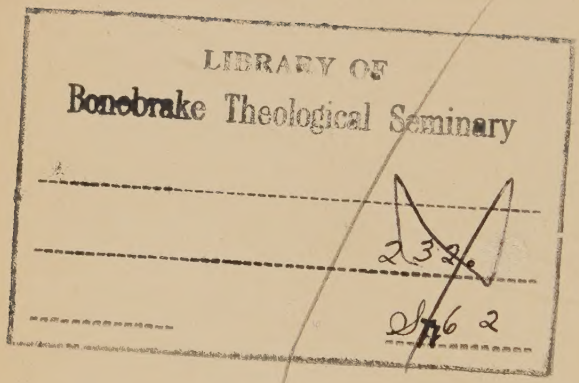
JESUS AS JUDGED BY HIS ENEMIES

JAMES H. SNOWDEN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Jesus As Judged By His Enemies

A Study of the Criticisms and Attacks Made on Jesus by His Enemies

BY
JAMES H. SNOWDEN

"For their rock is not as our Rock,
Even our enemies themselves being judges."
—Deut. 32. 31.

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CHAPTER I

THE JUDGMENT OF THE ENEMY

An ancient song of Israel declared, of the surrounding heathen, that "Their rock is not as our Rock, even our enemies themselves being judges." It is a strong case that can be surrendered to the judgment of enemies, and such was the case of Israel as they boldly submitted their God to comparison with the gods of the heathen and left the decision to the heathen themselves.

Jesus Christ triumphantly stands the same test. He had his enemies in his earthly life, and they had many things to say about him and against him. More than three score of these sayings are scattered through the Gospels. They form a remarkable body of testimony that is of the greatest value.

It is proposed in this series of studies to examine a number of these sayings and see what light they throw on the person and power of the Lord Jesus Christ. We begin with an evaluation of the judgment of the enemy, including under this term the opponents of Christ in his day and of Christianity in our day and also our personal opponents.

1. The enemy is a man with his full human rights. We are usually disposed to regard him as a wholly hostile and untrustworthy person, so blinded in his judgment by prejudice and partisanship, hatred and malice, that any testimony he may offer is at once to be rejected and spurned. Such judgment, however, is itself prejudiced and unfair.

It should be laid down as a preliminary principle that our opponent on any occasion is a man of like passions with ourselves. Friend and foe, however widely and bitterly they may be separated, have much in common, and the finding of this common ground is the first step toward their understanding one another and possible reconciliation. They may both be honest and sincere, and yet each be missing the point of view of the other and thus be "clashing like ignorant armies in the night." It is important, therefore, that they approach each other in the spirit of simple human confidence and respect and hold that they are both trying to reach the truth.

This attitude may in itself clear up the situation and put both sides in more pleasant and promising relations. The enemy has a right to state his case and to receive fair treatment.

The "scribes and Pharisees," who were the typical and persistent enemies of Jesus, were

often sincerely religious, and Jesus always treated them fairly and often kindly, though sometimes severely. His patient and tender treatment of doubt was one of the most remarkable and beautiful features of his ministry. Even when he was reviled he reviled not again, and under the falsest and most malicious charges and slanders he opened not his mouth.

We need to exercise the same spirit toward those who are, or seem to us to be, in opposition to Christ or to ourselves. We are often inclined to impute to them only bad motives and call them hard names. But they are men even as we are and may be as honest in their views as we are in ours.

It will help us as well as them and may enable us to get together for us all to stand on the broad ground of our common humanity and respect one another's rights and views. Bludgeons and bitter blows, whether material or verbal, will not help us to settle questions with those that differ from us. We have a right to our convictions, but they have the same right to theirs, and we should leave wide room for them to differ from us.

II. The enemy may have some truth on his side that we have missed on our side. Every human mind is partial and imperfect in its working and results, and therefore while we see

our side, another side is hidden from us which may lie open to the vision of our opponent. Instead, therefore, of wholly opposing his position, we should endeavor to reach his point of view and see what he sees in the hope that we may thereby gain some new light and broader vision.

In every great controversy, whether scientific, political, or religious, both sides have contributed something to the final outcome. It is almost never the case that all the truth and right are on one side and all the error and wrong on the other. Orthodox and heterodox, conservative and liberal, believer and unbeliever, often unconsciously work together toward some middle point or higher view and common end.

We should therefore be on our guard against undiscriminatingly opposing the enemy, lest we be found opposing the truth itself. An apparent enemy may be a friend in disguise, doing the cause we think he opposes a valuable service. We shudder yet at the name of Voltaire as an arch enemy of Christianity, but possibly he did a good work in opposing the kind of Christianity that confronted him.

Many of the supposed foes of Christianity are really clearing away from it abuses and poisonous excrescences that have grown up around it. They are not the opponents of Christ so much as of his mistaken or false followers.

We often may not fully know even our best friend until we hear what his enemies have to say about him; their prying fingers may have found some crack or crevice in his character that we have missed; or we may not know how pure and true he is until he stands in the searching light of their hostility or is subjected to the acid test of their hatred.

His enemies, even the bitterest, got some glimpses of Jesus that his own disciples failed to catch; and many of their judgments are among the most penetrating and splendid testimonies to him. Unconsciously they put upon his brow some of his brightest crowns. The Gospels would be rifled of some of their finest treasures if these sayings were blotted from their pages.

His enemies being judges, Jesus Christ was not as other men but looms above them sublimely as the greatest and most mysterious Figure of the world. And ever since his day some of the grandest eulogies upon him have been uttered by unbelievers. We may well be thankful for the testimony of the enemy.

III. The enemy may be a powerful factor in establishing and spreading the gospel. Hostile attacks lead believers to investigate and confirm and propagate the truth.

The enemies of Jesus often established more surely the facts in his life. His trial before the

Sanhedrin, prejudiced and unfair and malignant as it was, brought out his character and purpose and spirit as almost nothing else in his life did: in that gloom he shone as a white star. The precaution the Jews took to prevent any fraud in connection with his resurrection is one of the bulwarks of that fact to this day. The persecutions of the Christians in the Roman Empire were a powerful cause for the spread of Christianity, so that it became a proverb that "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church." Fire and sword could not stop the Reformation: they only spread it.

The attacks of unbelievers upon Christianity to-day are still often a potent means for its establishment: they lead believers to study into its origin and history more deeply and to apply it more widely and thoroughly. The scholars who are supposed to be attacking and destroying the Bible have repeatedly turned out to be its ablest defenders and truest friends. Christianity would not be where it is to-day had it not been for the work of its real or supposed enemies. They have helped to make it as the storm makes the oak.

IV. The enemy may become a friend. The line between friend and foe is not a fixed gulf across which no one can pass, but interchanges between the two sides are constantly taking

place, especially from foes to friends. The enemy may come to see that he misunderstands Christ and may turn to him in sympathy and faith. Some of the Pharisees became followers of Christ, and the bitterest and most powerful of all, Paul, became his greatest apostle. All the friends of Christ were once his enemies, and his progress through the world is accomplished by winning his enemies to his side.

The Emperor Constantine began by trying to crush Christ, and ended by raising his cross above his own eagles. Many a man has set out to criticize and oppose Christianity and ended by embracing it; many a soul has entered a religious meeting to scoff and remained to pray.

Our objective, then, in our approach to the enemy should not be to defeat him, to prove that we are right and he is wrong, but to win him as a convert. This principle should govern our relations to those outside the official bounds of Christianity at home, and is applicable and fruitful on the foreign missionary field.

So the enemy may be of great value to Christianity. He is a man with his rights, to be treated with toleration and respect, with some truth in his view which we should strive to gain, often an indirect agent in establishing and spreading religion, and not a foe to hate but a possible friend to win.

In the blazing focus of the criticism and hostility of his enemies Jesus Christ stands illuminated and tested, and nowhere else does his character shine out in purer worth and more splendid beauty.

CHAPTER II

A FALSE WORSHIPER

The enemies of Jesus appeared early. Before he had crept out of his cradle, and was still a helpless infant in his mother's arms, they made a desperate effort to destroy him. His mother, presenting her Babe for consecration in the Temple, heard the ominous prophecy, "Behold, this *child* is set . . . for a sign which is spoken against."

His first enemy was a mighty monster of iniquity. Herod the Great was king in Jerusalem when the Wise Men from the East appeared in the city inquiring for the newborn King of the Jews. The suspicious king instantly scented danger in the announcement, and the same good news that brought joy to shepherds and Wise Men sent trouble up into the palace and threw its royal occupant into a panic of fear.

Something had to be done to remove this possible rival, and the wily despot concocted a cunning plan to crush the infant in its very cradle. He sent for the Wise Men and with a pious air said to them, "Go and search out exactly concerning the young child; and when

ye have found *him*, bring me word, that I also may come and worship him." Professed worship was upon his lips, but murder was in his heart.

When he found that the Wise Men had slipped away without giving him the desired information and that his plot was thus thwarted, he sent soldiers down to Bethlehem and thrust a sword through every cradle in which was a male child under two years of age. A great cry of anguish swept out over the hill town at this monstrous act of wholesale murder. Yet even this far-flung net of destruction failed to catch its intended victim, for the holy Child had escaped.

I. Herod was right in his premonition of the significance of this birth and the importance of this Child. It is true that he only caught at the name, "King of the Jews," as the announcement of a possible rival, but he was on the right track in suspecting danger to his throne, and the danger was far deeper and wider than he knew.

The birth of that Babe marked a new epoch in the world's history; the clock of the calendar of the centuries then struck a new hour. Jesus represented and embodied principles that were destined in time to undermine and overthrow every throne of despotism. He was the first great Democrat, and he came to teach and inaugurate the brotherhood of man and give the

people their rights. As he has walked down through the ages despotic thrones have toppled over and representative government has sprung up. The Herods have been stripped of their arbitrary power and have been growing fewer in number, as Christendom broadens over the world.

And yet Jesus did not directly attack Herod or say a word against Cæsar. He brought no sword to rip up the existing order of the world. On the contrary, he paid taxes to the Roman government and was loyal to it. Nevertheless, he quietly introduced principles of human equality and popular rights, brotherhood and peace, that silently but surely undermined Cæsar's throne and in time has reconstructed the political fabric of the world. So the first enemy of Jesus was right in his interpretation of the significance of his advent into the world, though he was dreadfully wrong in his method of meeting it.

II. Herod stands for those who misunderstand the purpose and blindly if not wickedly oppose the progress of Jesus in the world. We are not rid of despotism when we have substituted an elective president for a hereditary king.

Old evils have a way of coming back under new names, and abuse of power and corruption

may spring up in a republic as well as in an empire. The "machine" and the "boss" may be as arbitrary and oppressive, corrupt and wicked, as any Herod of old. Capital and greed may crowd in upon the rights of the people and defraud them as unjustly and ruinously as the robber barons of mediæval times. These corrupt political combinations and leaders and special interests are as truly enemies of the principles of Jesus Christ as was any persecuting Cæsar.

There are businesses also, such as the liquor traffic, that are as afraid of Jesus Christ as was Herod in his consternation. They know that his church is against them, and though they may make a pretense of paying it outward respect, and may even ostentatiously contribute to its support, yet secretly they fear it and use every means in their power to thwart its work and purpose. There are men and interests so tyrannical and selfish that they stop not short of murder and would even slay Christ to gain their ends; at least, they are trampling upon and trying to destroy his principles and spirit that they may remove him from their selfish and wicked path.

III. Herod stands as the forerunner and representative of all false worshipers of Christ. "That I also may come and worship him" was the hypocritical plea under which he masked his

murderous purpose. He feigned loyalty to the King he would have assassinated. He bent his knee, but held a dagger in his hand. A kiss was upon his lips, but treachery in his heart.

A long line of successors have followed Herod into the presence of Jesus, outwardly declaring that they also are come to worship him, but secretly working as enemies of his cause. Kings and other high personages have posed as "defenders of the faith," who have disgraced it in their lives. Some scholars in their investigation of the Bible and of religion have shown a spirit of prepossession and unfriendliness that has done damage to the cause they were supposed to support. Even ministers have stood in the pulpit and disseminated doubt and practically destroyed the very gospel they pretended to preach.

And what a multitude of supposed worshipers have sat in the pews of the Christian Church and yet dishonored Christ. Some have deliberately used the church as a cloak of respectability and a means to success. Time was when the very name of Christ was a danger, and his cross pierced those who were brave to bear it: then hypocrites shunned it, and the church consisted of sifted and tried souls. But now Christianity has become respectable and popular; its cross is carved in ebony or set in gold as a fashionable

ornament, and church membership is a card of introduction into the best society or a certificate of character inviting confidence in business.

As a consequence the sanctuary may be thronged with worshipers some of whom are as palpable hypocrites as Herod. They sit reverently and conform to all the outward rites of the church, but inwardly they may be full of all manner of uncleanness and their lives are a living disproof of their profession. The most powerful enemies of Christ to-day are not those outside, but those inside, the church. The unworthy lives of his professed followers are the greatest weakness and hindrance of his kingdom. Every unfaithful Christian so far belongs to Herod's party and is thrusting his sword through the cradle of Christ or crucifying him afresh.

IV. Yet Herod with all his cunning plot and despotic power could not touch a hair of the head of the newborn King. As easily could he have struck down Cæsar from his throne or crushed the great globe of the earth flat as he could have harmed that Babe. God stood within that shadow of hatred "keeping watch above his own."

Thus the first enemy of Jesus was thwarted in his unholy plot and purpose, and this was prophetic of the failure and folly of all those that seek to destroy this Child. The cross could

not crush him, death could not extinguish his spirit, the Roman Empire with all its persecuting power could not stop him, but silently and irresistibly he has stepped through the centuries, instilling his spirit and establishing his kingdom. And so will he continue his march of mercy and might until he hath put all enemies under his feet and is crowned Lord of all.

CHAPTER III

"CAN ANY GOOD THING COME OUT OF NAZARETH?"

THIS was the disparaging reply that Nathanael made to Philip when he announced, "We have found him, of whom Moses in the law . . . did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." Nathanael was a pious man, "an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile," but his first attitude toward Jesus was that of opposition, growing out of prejudice against the town from which he came, and therefore he must be included for a moment among the enemies of Jesus, though he presently became his loyal friend and disciple.

Nathanael's prejudice against Nazareth may have been due to the fact that he himself was from the rival town of Cana, or it may have been his simple incredulity that so great a character as the promised Messiah could come from so small and obscure a place. Prejudice against Jesus on account of his humble origin was not confined to Nathanael, but existed in Nazareth itself and was intense and bitter up in Jerusalem, where "the chief priests and Pharisees" trium-

phantly refuted and rebuked Nicodemus by the challenge (John 7. 52), "Search, and see that out of Galilee ariseth no prophet."

I. Thus the first hostile judgment that fell upon Jesus was that of prejudice against his origin. An obscure hill town up in a provincial district was no fit place for a prophet to come from. The village was not even mentioned in the Old Testament, and would all the glowing visions of the prophets and great hopes of the nation find their fulfillment in so obscure and despised a place? Would not Jerusalem, as it sat on its historic hill, crowned with its marble Temple, with its blazing gold roof, in which thronging worshipers witnessed the magnificent ritual of gorgeously robed priests, and perfumed incense bore prayers to heaven, be the worthy recipient of so great an honor? But that the Messiah should appear up among the hill towns and fishing villages of Galilee—who could believe it? The proud priests and Pharisees, deeply insulted at the suggestion, scornfully resented it, and Nathanael himself, a pious citizen of Galilee, could not at first credit it.

The Jews of Jerusalem were much given to priding themselves on their birth and city and holding themselves superior to the common herd of men. "We have Abraham to our father," was their haughty claim, and they disdainfully

looked down upon and despised those who were not of their ancestral aristocracy. And so they were in an ill mood to receive a provincial prophet and at once branded him as an impossibility, if not an impostor.

This principle of judgment is everywhere prevalent and powerful in the world. Notorious is the rivalry of towns and cities and countries by which the citizens of one arrogate to themselves superior eminence and dignity over another.

Especially does the metropolis look down upon the provinces, the city upon the town and village, and even the village upon the country. Men think to measure themselves by the magnitude of the city to which they belong, and a resident of New York or Chicago swells up into large self-esteem in his relations with the rural dweller. It is hard for us to think that anybody of importance can come from a rival city or a country town. We are the people, and anyone that aspires to be somebody must be one of us.

The aristocracy of birth and blood works in the same way, and the aristocracy of wealth, especially of the newly rich, often breeds a coarser and more vulgar spirit of assumed superiority and contempt for the common crowd.

And so men are often judged by the place they come from, or their ancestral connections, or their bank account, or the clothes they wear,

and those who are rising from the common level to conspicuous heights at first meet with rejection and may be dismissed with a sneer.

II. But these artificial distinctions and barriers cannot long withstand genuine worth and power and are often quickly swept away. Nature will not submit to such standards and makes short work with them. God is against them.

John the Baptist, himself an insurgent against social and religious conventionalities as he preached out in the wilderness in a rough coat bound around him with a leather strap, poured contempt upon them as he told the proud priests and Pharisees, boasting of their Abrahamic descent, that God could raise up better men out of stones and dirt.

And how often has this been almost literally done as men have come up out of the lowest strata of society and have occupied the seats of the mighty! Out of the primal elements of humanity have emerged men of superior and even supreme worth and power, as out of the molten heart of the globe volcanoes pour forth irresistible floods of lava and pile up great mountains.

Nearly all the molders of human thought and makers of history have originated close to the ground and have sprung from its soil. The most noted birthplace in Scotland is that of Burns: it

is a humble stone cottage with a thatched roof and a stable in one end of it. The most celebrated birthplace in England is that of Shakespeare, and again it is a plain cottage in a country village. Lincoln was born in a log hut in the wilds of Kentucky, Mohammed was the son of a camel driver, and Confucius of a soldier. It would seem that when Nature wants to mold a great man she goes back to the soil and mixes him out of virgin clay untainted by degenerate heredity.

The aristocracies of birth and wealth furnish few of the prophets and leaders of the race. The city is mostly ruled by the rural regions. Boys with fresh blood and virile grit come up from the country to the city and take possession of it: soon they are transacting its business and living in its palaces. Democracy has a way of asserting itself and shows its contempt for privilege and precedent. The sneers of the upper classes are answered by voices from the great deep, and men of real worth and power triumphantly come to their own.

III. Jesus himself was the supreme exemplar of this truth. He came, not from proud Jerusalem, but from humble and despised Nazareth. Nathanael thought he was therefore an impossible Messiah, and the priests and Pharisees were sure no prophet could come from such an

origin, but "he could not be hid." His inherent worth, his human and divine power, asserted itself with the might of omnipotence.

All Jewish contempt and opposition and the whole weight of the Roman Empire could not keep him down. He rose to his true rank and power with the irresistibleness of the cosmic force that pushes up mountains and holds planets in their orbits. Artificial dignities and boastful claims were swept from his path like straws before the wind. He walked up to Jerusalem and stirred the whole city with his presence. Priests and Pharisees and Roman governors and soldiers could avail nothing against him. He walked through the Roman Empire and lifted it off its hinges. He has come down through the centuries, and thrones and despotisms and false distinctions of birth and blood and wealth and fashion have been trampled under his feet.

His gospel means an end to class privileges and artificial aristocracies, and a democracy of human souls. He has answered the sneer at his humble origin by making all such sneers despicable and lifting all human life to the level of brotherhood.

IV. Philip gave a beautiful answer to Nathanael's prejudice: "Come and see." He did not argue with him and try to convince him of

his error: this would probably only have driven Nathanael deeper into it. He would then have defended it, and all his antagonism to Nazareth as a rival town or an unworthy place for the Messiah to come from would have been aroused. But he could not well decline this simple reasonable invitation to come and see for himself. This instantly disarmed his prejudice and put him in a candid and receptive mood.

The result was most gratifying to both Philip and Nathanael. The skeptic became converted, all his prejudices melted away in the presence of Jesus like mist in the morning sun, and Nathanael became a fast friend and faithful disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ.

This is generally the wisest way of dealing with the criticisms and opposition of the enemies of Christ. Argument is not the best weapon with which to meet their attacks. It stirs up controversy, deepens prejudices and enmities, and often only convinces both sides of their own convictions.

Personal experience of Christ will dissolve doubts of and disarm opposition to him. "Come and see" is still our best answer to his enemies. If we can lead them into his presence, his gracious personality, his "sweet reasonableness and light," his forgiving power and peace will win them from being enemies and transform them into friends.

CHAPTER IV

WHENCE HATH THIS MAN THESE THINGS?

Jesus preached twice in the synagogue of Nazareth and on both occasions was received with sneers and rejected with unbelief and scorn. His enemies were of his own town and even of his own household, and this must have been one of the bitterest drops in his cup of disappointment and trial. In the most literal sense "he came unto his own, and his own received him not."

It might be thought a heavy score in the account against him that he was rejected by the people of the very town in which he had been brought up, with whom he had lived as neighbors and companions for thirty years and who therefore knew him best. Jesus himself felt the point and the poignancy of this charge, and explained it on the proverbial principle that "No prophet is acceptable in his own country."

I. A year or two before these events, Jesus had closed his carpenter shop and gone south into Judæa, whence marvelous stories had floated back on the tide of returning pilgrims of his wonderful works in cleansing the Temple and

performing miracles and appearing as the Messiah. His arrival would set all tongues gossiping and create a tremendous sensation in the sleepy old town. His preaching in the village synagogue at first fulfilled expectations as all wondered at the gracious words that fell from his lips.

But presently wonder became tinged with envy and suspicion and then turned into enmity and burst in an explosion of wrath. "Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works? Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joseph, and Simon, and Judas? And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things? And they were offended in him."

This was the catalogue of charges they drew up against him. They emphasized his lowly birth and noted with statistical particularity each member of his humble family. Comparing his profession of Messiahship with his pedigree, they said the two did not match. A carpenter's son could never be a prophet. Because they knew him so well they thought he could never amount to much. He was simply one of themselves, and how could he be the Messiah?

Men are often disposed to measure others by themselves, and think a mistake has been made when one of their own number rises to distinc-

tion. A man becomes famous elsewhere, but when he comes back to the town and mingles with those among whom he once was a boy they wonder by what accident or luck one no better than themselves has attained to such eminence. It is still true that "no prophet is acceptable in his own country."

Those who are close to greatness do not always appreciate it, as those who live in the Alps are seldom susceptible to their sublimity. The Nazarenes were blind to their most illustrious citizen, but all the ages have concentrated their gaze upon him, and it is only his name casting its light upon that obscure mountain village that has rescued it from oblivion, as a sunbeam, falling on a mote, makes it luminous and conspicuous.

II. The only disparagement these citizens of Nazareth and neighbors of Jesus could utter against him was that he was of a humble family on the same level with themselves. They knew nothing that cast the slightest shadow of dishonor on his early character and life. But as was often the case with the charges of enemies against Jesus, they turned out to be crowns of honor rather than stigmas of guilt or shame.

That Jesus was born in a carpenter's family and had humble but honest human relatives is nothing against him, but is a mark of honor.

These relations are the ties that knit him into the race of men and make him bone of their bone and flesh of their flesh. This is the origin whence sprung his humanity, as true and necessary and precious a side of his nature as is his divinity. Because he had such a mother and such brothers and sisters, he can bear the burden of our sin and bring us back into the fellowship of the Father and can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities and be our Saviour and Friend.

III. "Whence hath this man these things?" The question sounded a deeper note than these Nazarenes knew. They did well to wonder that such a Man should spring from their midst and ask whence he obtained his wisdom and power.

The question still challenges us and can find no sufficient answer from a purely human origin. Jesus Christ cannot be explained in terms of human heredity. We always look back along the line of a man's ancestry to find his explanation, the origin of this trait or that special aptitude, and generally can trace the several streams that have blended in his being to their ancestral fountains. It is true that at times nature seems to spring a surprise and produces an inexplicable genius, such as Shakespeare; yet we believe that human heredity will account for all the sons of men.

But we cannot bring the person of Jesus Christ within the bounds of this principle. He has in him elements that are too original and powerful to be thus derived; they overleap all human limits and could have had their origin only in some deeper and divine Fountain. The humble family of Nazareth and all the strands of heredity that wove the wonderful Jewish race could never have produced this perfect and marvelous Pattern of humanity. That old Hebrew root, rich as it was and still is in great human personalities, could never unaided have blossomed into this fine Flower of character that is still the praise of the ages.

IV. Neither can Jesus Christ be explained by his teachers, by the schools and thought and aspirations of his time. He was brought up in the synagogue and school of his village and was a thorough student of the Old Testament, the rich and splendid literature of his race, which he assimilated into his very blood and life. He observed its ordinances, preached its doctrines, quoted its sayings, trusted its promises, and fulfilled the glowing visions of its prophets.

Nevertheless, these seeds will not account for the fruit of his person and life. The soil is too shallow and barren to bear so wonderful a harvest. His teachings are too original and powerful to be explained by the traditions of the

Pharisees or even the visions of the prophets. It is true that many of his sayings can be traced in germ back through the writings and sayings of other prophets and teachers; but these germs will not explain the new depth and power of meaning that he breathed into them.

Shakespeare appropriated and absorbed many lines and passages from earlier writers, but these writers do not explain Shakespeare. He gathered all such light into the focus of his own brain and there made it blaze in such vividness and power as exhibited a higher order of genius. So Jesus Christ gathered into himself all the light of the Hebrew prophets, but he alone raised it to such power that it became the Light of the world.

V. And, once more, Jesus Christ cannot be explained by his environment; he did not issue out of the peculiar conjunction of events in his time.

Great men often appear to be the product of their age. They arise in answer to a call for such men and are created by the very demand they supply. Washington was the product of the Revolution, and Lincoln of the Civil War. Grant would have died in obscurity had it not been for the opportunity of Donelson and Vicksburg.

So, it has been contended, Jesus Christ was the product of his age. It was a time of fading faith and growing oppression, and he happened

to arrive at the pregnant juncture when a religious genius was needed to revive the dying hopes of men and give them a new religion. He is the outcome of all the conflicts and failures and aspirations of his time, "a splendid column of spray sent up by the collision of east and west, of Judaism and the farther East, of prophetism and gnosticism."

Again the explanation is inadequate, the effect is too vast for the alleged cause. No doubt the circumstances of the time did converge toward the appearance of Jesus Christ. Hebrew preparation, Roman peace, and heathen failure and despair were elements in the soil out of which he sprang. All things appear in their proper place in the divine plan, and "when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son."

But the time of the coming of the Son did not make the Son. The Man of Nazareth is too large and deep in his personality and power to be explained by such origins; he overleaps all such limits, and still the question confronts us, Whence hath this man all these things? We must look up, and not down and around, for the answer. As we cannot explain the green grass without the blue sky, and the blossoming earth without the shining sun, so we cannot explain Jesus Christ without his divinity in which dwells the fullness of the Godhead bodily.

CHAPTER V

IS NOT THIS THE CARPENTER?

YES, that is just who it was. The question was asked by his townsmen in derision and scorn, as though it would place a stigma upon Jesus that would forever discredit him as a prophet, but the designation has ever since been worn by him as a mark of honor.

It is a startling fact, which even after eighteen hundred years has not lost its wonder, that the Saviour of the world was a carpenter. This is not what the Jews expected, and it is not what we would expect. They looked and longed for a Messiah who would come as a royal conqueror, wearing purple robes and marshaling great armies to break the iron rule of Rome and raise them to political power and splendor. We would look for a great scholar or statesman with wisdom and eloquence to move the world. But God's ways are not as our ways, and his Son came neither as the one nor as the other, but as a carpenter.

This question is the only gleam of light we have from the life of Jesus from the twelfth to the thirtieth year of his age. Of this long period, comprising more than half his life, not a word is

recorded to tell us what he was doing except this word "carpenter." But as an artist with a single sweep of his brush will sometimes draw the outline of his picture, so this word paints in outline the life of Jesus during this period. It sketches the life of one who did not separate himself from his fellow men, but knit himself into the humblest human relations. It shows us a common toiler, working at a humble trade and living contentedly in honest poverty.

There is color enough in this word to paint a complete picture of the outer life of Jesus. It is worth more than all the apocryphal Gospels that are full of absurd stories of his youth. "We may indeed be thankful," says Farrar, "that the word remains, for it is full of meaning and has exercised a noble and blessed influence over the fortunes of mankind."

What are some of the lessons of this pregnant designation of Jesus, given him by his enemies?

I. First, we see that Jesus engaged in useful work. He was a producer, as the word translated carpenter literally means. There were more and better houses in Nazareth, or more plows and ox-yokes on the surrounding farms because he lived and toiled. We are sure that his trade was well learned and that everything that left his shop displayed the most thorough and finished workmanship.

He who could build a star and sweep the orbit of a planet, whose hand had left its finishing touch on every grass blade and dewdrop, could also lay off his angles and strike his circles true, and he could mortise timbers or shape ox-yokes so that they would render the best service and would last. His work never needed to be done over after him; he left no loose joints to be tightened up, or rough places to be smoothed down. He put in full time and did as good work when alone as when in the presence of his employer. Every one knew that he could be trusted, and his work bore an unsurpassed reputation and commanded the highest prices.

All this was a true part of his ministry by which he helped to save the world from cold and hunger; and it was a fitting preparation for that spiritual carpentry by which he was to join humanity together and build a kingdom that would stand forever.

We need more of this spirit of faithful service in useful lines in these days when there is so much slovenly work done in every trade and profession, and so many are contributing nothing to the wealth and welfare of the world. There are many men and women that are non-producers and mere consumers. They are not doing anything that is useful to others, but are simply living in idleness and pleasure. They

consume food and clothing and luxuries, they require many others to serve them, but they never serve others. The world is never the richer for their having lived in it by a grain of wheat or a nobler thought.

Every one ought to test his life by the standard of productiveness for human welfare. "Sure good," says Ruskin, "is first in feeding people, then in dressing people, and lastly rightly pleasing people with arts, or sciences, or any other subject of thought." "The thistle that grows in thy path," says Carlyle, "dig it out, that a blade of grass, or a drop of nourishing milk, may grow there instead. The waste cotton shrub, gather its waste white down, spin it, weave it: that in place of idle litter there may be folded webs, and the naked skin of man be covered."

II. Second, we see that Jesus was content to stay in the ranks of common toilers. His reputed father was a carpenter, and he continued in the same trade. He did not strive to enter the law, which was the most influential profession among the Jews. He did not hunt around for some easier and more rapid way of making money, but contentedly toiled on.

There is a great deal said in these days about "getting on in the world," by which it is meant that young men should get off the farms and out of the trades into the professions and offices, and

that everybody should get rich. The feeling is created and sown in the very air that a boy is worth nothing unless he means to be, and gives promise of becoming, a great capitalist or statesman or professional man. "Success" is an emphatic word in our vocabulary.

Now, it is undoubtedly true that everyone should endeavor to develop his powers to the fullest measure in useful service, and this is a worthy ambition. But this cry of "getting on in the world" generally sets up false ideals and hopes and works great harm. It is physically impossible that all should get on in the sense intended. Not all young men can become professional men, for the great mass of them must work on farms and in trades. We cannot all get rich, for there is not enough wealth to go around. So the gospel of success begets hopes which in many cases must be disappointed.

But, worse still, it sets up a false standard of manhood. It measures worth by wealth, and puts position above disposition. But the truth is that men in getting up in this sense often go down.

The true standard of manhood is something immeasurably better than wealth and something that every one can attain. "I believe," says Charles Kingsley, "that a man might be, as a tailor or as a carpenter, every inch of him a

saint, a scholar, and a gentleman." A saint, a scholar, and a gentleman: these are the qualities that constitute a true man, and every man, whatever his station in life, can have them.

Jesus was as truly a saint, a scholar, and a gentleman while making plows and ox-yokes as while preaching the Sermon on the Mount. Instead of keeping up this everlasting cry of getting on in the world and teaching it to our children, let us know that most of us must stay where we are, and that in the humblest station we can develop the highest manhood and every one of us be a saint, a scholar, and a gentleman.

III. What, now, is the relation of the church of to-day to Jesus the carpenter? or, What is the relation of the church to workingmen, of whom Jesus was one? The painful fact must be admitted that there is a chasm which appears to be growing between the church and the working classes, especially in the cities. The causes for this separation are complex and lie partly on both sides. But we ought to be most concerned with the causes that lie, not on the side of the workingmen, but on the side of the church.

The main cause on the part of the church is the caste spirit of wealth and fashion and pride that is creeping into it. Costly churches are built in which only well-to-do and rich people are expected or even permitted to worship. It is

a literal and would be a ludicrous, were it not such a shocking, fact that if Jesus were to appear unknown in his carpenter's clothes in some churches in which he is worshiped to-day, he would be given the cold shoulder and might even be shown the way out. The church that was founded by a Carpenter whom the common people heard gladly and whose gospel was first preached by fishermen, that began by leveling all human distinctions and gathering in the poor, has begun the process of sifting out the upper classes and is in danger of becoming the exclusive possession and privilege of the rich.

Workingmen instinctively feel this and are publicly saying it. And so, while the churches are running after and welcoming people of means and social standing who come with gloved hands and spotless linen, the workingmen are passing them by in crowds.

This charge does not lie equally against all churches, nor only against rich churches: the same spirit may be in any church, and it may be in yours and in mine. If we by any means, or air of treatment, make any distinctions among people by which it will be more easy and agreeable for some to worship in our church than for others, if we begin any process of sifting out what we are pleased to consider the better classes, we are guilty of deadly sin against the

very cross of Christ. And if we make a church in which Jesus the Carpenter would not be just as welcome as Christ the glorified, he will repudiate us with wrathful indignation, as he did the church of the Pharisees, and publicans and harlots shall go into the kingdom of God before us.

CHAPTER VI

HOW KNOWETH THIS MAN LETTERS?

Having been rejected in his native village, how was Jesus received up in the cosmopolitan city? As in Nazareth, so in Jerusalem, "the Jews marveled" at his teaching, and met it with the wondering exclamation, shading into the disparaging criticism, "How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?" "What college has he been to, that he should teach us?"

Jesus had never been to either of the two famous colleges in Jerusalem through which the scribes passed and had received no instruction outside of the village school and synagogue. He had come up from despised Nazareth, sunk in provincial illiteracy and boorishness, and was teaching with evident popularity and power in Jerusalem, the university town and intellectual center of the Jews. How could this be?

The Pharisees and scribes pinned their faith to book learning. In their view, everything worth knowing in religion had been thought out and written down by them "of old time," and nothing remained to do but to repeat this over and over again. Any originality of thought or

variation from the old orthodoxy was viewed as a dangerous heresy to be ruthlessly suppressed. Jesus astonished them because he had none of their professional learning, and yet he spake as never man spake.

I. A high place must be given to the learning of the schools. If we were to disparage colleges and universities, libraries and laboratories, the very stones would cry out against us. Our highly complex civilization is largely built on technical knowledge and professional skill. It is absurd to suppose that just any man off the street could go into a steel mill and manage it, into a hospital and perform a surgical operation, or into a court room and conduct a law case. Men must be trained for these skilled services, and the professional school is the normal place to obtain such training.

But a danger attends such learning. Its tendency is to become conventionalized, professionalized, fossilized. It may become filled with pride and grow exclusive and intolerant toward all who cannot show an official diploma. Presently it may be found rejecting and obstructing new light, and, if not marveling, then sneering at a new teacher, "How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?"

Illustrations of this occur in every line of life. It often happens that great inventions and

achievements in any given field come from those who are outside its official circle. The greatest invention in the production of steel is the Bessemer process of decarbonizing molten metal by blowing air through it. It was discovered independently by William Kelley, an American, and Henry Bessemer, an Englishman. Neither of these men was originally a steel maker, and both of them were "treated like impertinent meddlers by the steel men of America and Europe." They were jeered at: "How can these men make steel, having never learned?"

So in every kind of business there are men who are breaking into it from outside its trained class and official circle, and these are often the men of initiative and enterprise who revolutionize it and astonish the world. Who taught Robert Burns to write poetry? What college did he attend? None whatever. Yet that humble plowboy turned clods and daisies and "The Cotter's Saturday Night" into poetry that will never lose its charm. Learned and illiterate alike read his well-thumbed pages and never stop to inquire what college he attended.

II. There are two kinds of men in every line of achievement: those who are officially and artificially trained for it, and those who have the root of the matter in them by natural endowment, a gift or talent for it.

There are two kinds of fountains. One is the artificial. It may have a marble basin and a richly decorated iron or bronze stand, fed by an underground pipe through which water is forced from a reservoir supplied by a pump. The other is the natural fountain, a big spring that gushes from the living rock at the base of a hill, surrounded with grasses and ferns and overshadowed by great oaks, or pines. It has its roots deep in the hill or mountain and is fed by rains falling on far summits. The artificial fountain plays only when it is turned on and emits river water, tepid and insipid, sewer-contaminated and fever-infected. The natural spring flows the year round and gurgles forth cool sparkling water, clear as crystal and pure as the unflecked sky. The artificial fountain is useful in its way, but it is the living spring that feeds the meadows and vitalizes the world.

Now, the professionally trained man may be an artificial fountain: the thing has been put into him. The man of native gift is the natural spring: the matter bubbles and boils out of him and he cannot help it. The one is a man of rules and precedents; the main question with him is: Is it according to the books and rules of the profession? He is in danger of becoming professionalized and fossilized, pompous and pretentious, with a narrow official air and pride, suspicious

of anything outside his range of vision, bigoted and blind toward any new light.

The man of native gift is likely to be untrammeled by traditional rules and regulations, free from class prejudice and pride, hospitable toward innovation and progress, and works things out in his own way and puts on them the stamp of his originality and individuality. This man does not need to go to artificial fountains in schools and books, for he has a well of water within himself springing up into new life. The man of artificial rules is useful in his way, but it is the man of native gift and power that pours forth living streams and keeps the world green.

III. Now Jesus was not an artificial fountain but a living spring. He did not have his religious experience forced through him by schools and books, but it gushed up within him and was a living well in his own heart. The Pharisees and scribes were highly artificial fountains that sent forth only what had been pumped into them; but Jesus sent forth his own stream of experience and teaching.

Of course Jesus did not despise books and learning, creeds and catechisms: he knew these things and used them; only they were not his masters but his servants. He read them and then corrected them and brought them up to date. He even boldly contradicted "them of old

time." His main authorities were not books and schools, but experience and life.

Where does the poet go for his poetry? To spelling books and grammars and dictionaries? No, these would not make a poet in fifty years. He goes to nature and life, to the trees and grass and sky and to the human life that beats around him, and he simply puts down what his poetic eye sees. So Jesus went for his knowledge of religion not to books about religion, but to religion itself as experienced in his own soul.

For his knowledge of God the Lord Jesus did not go to books of theology about God, but he went to God himself, and in fellowship with the Father he learned the secret of his character and will and ways. "My teaching is not mine," he explained to the Jews, "but his that sent me." His knowledge of faith was not derived from a psychological analysis of faith, or from what others said about it, but from the faith he exercised in his own heart. His knowledge of immortality was not deduced from speculative hints and hopes, but from his actual experience of eternal life. This deep, fresh, inner fountain of experience was the secret of his marvelous teaching, though he had never been taught.

IV. We can and ought to have the same kind of religious knowledge. We have so many schools and books and hear so much about the

importance of creeds that we are in danger of confusing these means with religious life. Important as books and creeds are, their tendency is to turn us into artificial fountains so that only that which has been poured into us will come out of us.

Infinitely more important it is that we have a well of water springing up in our hearts. We can have direct knowledge of God through faith and obedience, just as Jesus had. "If any man willeth to do his will," he said, "he shall know of the teaching whether it is of God." Then our religious life will not be forced through us, insipid and stale out of books and creeds, but it will gush out of us in streams of living water.

CHAPTER VII

A NEW TEACHING!

"WHAT is this?" the unfriendly Jews asked after hearing Jesus. "A new teaching!" they exclaimed. Jesus Christ, then, was himself a teacher of new theology. He did not keep to the old paths of the scribes and Pharisees, but boldly struck out into new paths. He revised and rewrote the religious creeds of his day and started this process of ever bringing religion up to date down through the centuries.

It is true that there is a changeless element in the changing forms of religion. The fundamental principles of religion do not change, but only our understanding and application of them. The new astronomy interprets the same heavens as the old astronomy, but in a truer way, and the new science of medicine is only the old science corrected and made to fit the facts more closely. It is the same old tree, but the blossoms are new every spring. It is the same gospel we preach from age to age, but its interpretation and application are ever new.

On the occasion when this exclamation was uttered Jesus had cast out unclean spirits and had made his teaching new in three respects.

I. He taught with new authority. The scribes and Pharisees also taught with authority and, in fact, authority was their chief stock in trade, but it was of a very different kind from that of Jesus. Theirs was the authority of official persons and traditional doctrine. Their teaching was crystallized into an authoritative creed which every one was required to believe and no one was permitted to doubt. All the thinking had been done, and nothing was left to do but simply to accept it.

This kind of authority passed over into the Christian Church and came to its full blossom and went to seed in the Roman hierarchy. The Pope will kindly do all our thinking for us and leaves us small margin in which to do any for ourselves. His authority is infallible and final in matters of religion, and we must submit to his teaching or be cast into outer darkness.

Modern science has undermined such authority. Its truth-seeking spirit bids us go straight to the facts and find out the truth for ourselves. What others have discovered and thought may help us, and we have a right to use their results, but we must test every spirit for ourselves and know the truth at first hand. Experience is the main path to knowledge. If we would know the truth of a doctrine, we must try it for ourselves and not simply take another's

word for it, though it be the word of some great authority or prophet of old.

But who was the first to use this scientific method of finding the truth? Jesus Christ. He knew the Father in immediate personal experience and his appeal to men was, "Come and see." He never attempted to do another's thinking for him, but always referred him to the facts. When John sent disciples to ask Jesus if he were the Messiah, Jesus did not give a dogmatic answer to the question, but sent some further facts to John and told him to work out the matter for himself. The authority that Jesus used was the authority of truth.

This was a new teaching in his day, and it is a teaching much needed in our day. Whatever means we are to use in the way of records and great names, historic creeds and confessions—and such means are necessary—we are to go through these to Christ himself and to God and thus gain personal experience of the truth; and on this authority only are we to rest.

II. Jesus taught with new adaptation of the truth. We have no record of the sermon preached on this occasion, but we can judge it by its effects: it stirred up unclean spirits; therefore it hit them, it was adapted to the audience and to the needs of the hour.

The teaching of the Pharisees and scribes had

small relation to existing human conditions and needs; it was a monotonous droning away on abstract theological and ecclesiastical questions that were of no use and interest, and therefore the people went to sleep under it.

Jesus began to preach to the people truth that went home to their hearts and lives and therefore they heard him gladly. His preaching was like a fresh breeze or breath of spring over the parched and barren fields of rabbinical teaching.

But did Jesus adapt his teaching to the larger conditions of his day? Did he have anything to say on the Roman empire with its oppression, on social unrest and on slavery? He did not go at these questions with violent means of revolution, but he did approach them along the line of evolution.

On the question of the Roman yoke he taught the people to render unto Cæsar the things that were Cæsar's and unto God the things that were God's, and this put a principle down under that Roman tyranny that finally toppled it over. He refused to decide a lawsuit between two brothers, but he said, "Beware of covetousness," and thereby put his finger on the root of all our social unrest and indicated its cure. He did not abolish slavery by one stroke, but he let loose a spirit of brotherhood that slowly banished it.

Jesus Christ was a tremendous preacher to the times and to all times. He adapted his teaching to immediate personal needs and to far political and social problems; and thus he stands central in the centuries, so that in every age men, as they hear his gospel, exclaim, "A new teaching!"

It is our business to effect this constant readjustment of his truth so that it will fit our day. There is no personal need or social problem it will not meet and satisfy or solve, only it is left to us to adapt and apply it.

III. Jesus taught with new efficiency. He not only stirred up the unclean spirits with his sermon, but he also cast them out by his power. The Pharisees and scribes, the doctors of divinity of the day, had grown impotent to heal or to do anybody any good. But through that same land and people Jesus walked and scattered works of healing, forgiveness, comfort, on every side. His gospel was no mere fine theory but a practical power. It cast out evil spirits, healed the sick, opened blind eyes, and raised the dead. No wonder that the people were astonished and exclaimed, "A new teaching!"

And the words he uttered there were seeds that have been cast over the world and are sprouting on every shore. Jesus Christ reached his hand through the centuries to Rome, stopped

its gladiatorial shows, and emptied its vast Coliseum. He breathed his doctrines of the worth and rights of the individual man and the brotherhood of all men through the world and thereby withered slavery and finally blew its last remnant out of Christendom. These same principles undermined despotism and tempered and transformed monarchy into democracy, and thereby gave birth to our modern representative governments.

And still his hand is present and potent in our modern life, stirring up social unrest into dissatisfaction with and rebellion against old unjust conditions, and yet tempering it with reason and right and rebuilding our social structure into a new brotherhood of humanity. The greatest thing we can do is to live the gospel and thus give it new efficiency in the world.

Thus Jesus Christ taught with new authority, the authority of experience; with new adaptation, fitting the gospel to individual needs and social conditions; and with new efficiency, making it do the work of healing and saving men and society and starting processes that will transform this world into the kingdom of God. We are sent into the world to do the same works that he did, and therefore we are to know and teach the gospel with the same authority, adaptation, and efficiency.

CHAPTER VIII

STRANGE THINGS

On this occasion Jesus was preaching in a house in Capernaum. The people crowded into the house and around it, blocking up the doors and the very street. The Pharisees and scribes sat around, cold and critical, watching their chance to entrap Jesus.

Four men drew near, carrying on a bed a helpless paralytic whom they were bringing to the great Healer. When they could not get in by the door they climbed up on the roof, tore a hole through the light structure and let their man right down at the feet of the Physician. Jesus forgave the paralytic his sin and sent him home carrying the very bed that had carried him.

The people dispersed, some criticizing and others wondering, but all amazed, saying, "We have seen strange things to-day." What had they seen?

I. First, they had seen strange earnestness. The Pharisees and priests had become so conventionalized and cold in their religion that all the heat had been frozen out of them and they showed little warmth of human sympathy with

their fellow men in distress. The priest and Levite passed by on the other side of the road from the wounded Jew whom the good Samaritan saved.

The four men that came bearing their helpless friend to Jesus on a bed were moved by a zeal that must have seemed strange if not ignobly servile to the Pharisees and scribes. The four friends, however, were not thinking of their own dignity, but of their neighbor's need. Their burning hearts urged them on. It would have been easy for them to have found in the throng that blocked up the door an excuse to stop. If they had not had much interest in their helpless friend or much faith in Jesus, if they had found their task troublesome, if they had not really wanted to go in, they could readily have persuaded themselves there was reason enough for staying out. But they were bound to get in, and they got in. Nothing could stop such earnestness as drove them on, though the roof had to come off.

The meaning is that we can do what we want to do. Where there's a will there's a way. Before a will bent on its purpose, before a heart driven by intense earnestness, doors may be blocked up, but roofs will come off. If we do not want to go to church or prayer meeting, we will see lions crouching at the door; but if we want

to go, we shall be there. All our spiritual life and religious work should take on a deeper tone and more strenuous endeavor.

We are too often playing at religion. Any ordinary obstruction will stop us, whereas we should have such persistence and might as will tear the roof off to clear the way to Christ and his service.

II. The second strange thing seen that day was a new method in religious work. The Pharisees and scribes were confined to the traditional ritual which could not be infringed upon or changed to meet an emergency, but these four men were confronted with the practical problem of getting their impotent friend before the Physician.

The ordinary method would have been to take the man in through the door. The extraordinary method followed was to take the man up on top of the house, tear a hole through the roof, and let him down. The people probably had never seen this thing done before, and it was a strange thing to them and must have offended the critical Pharisees.

We should be ready and apt to adopt new methods in our church work and Christian service. We are ever in danger of becoming so wedded to the old ways that we think they cannot be changed without sacrilege. The history

of the church is full of this spirit. We know that in this country such changes as lining out a hymn two lines instead of one at a time, putting stoves in the church, and using organs in praise were resisted and fought as though they had been blasphemies. Churches have been torn all to pieces over whether the choir leader should use a tuning fork to catch the pitch or not. We may smile at these things, and yet fall into the same mistake ourselves. The old ways may have been good, but when a better way may be had we are to drop the old and use the new.

The simple principle to follow is that of highest efficiency. A new method is not to be adopted simply because it is new. If these four men could have got their friend in through the door, it would have been folly for them to have climbed up on the roof. We are never to tear off the roof simply for the sake of doing a strange thing. Sensational eccentricities and freaks are to be kept out of the church. The methods of the side show are not seemly in the sanctuary.

Yet, on the other hand, we are to beware of being too tightly bound down by order and conventionality, dignity and good taste. The devil is never afraid of our dignity, and good taste never saved a soul. Too much order may be death. It is beautiful, but it is the beauty of an ice crystal.

We should be ready to do anything in the church that will do the most good. Ordinarily let us come in through the door, but when it is necessary or best in order to heal men, let us come down through the roof, even though it creates a sensation and people say it is a strange thing.

III. The third strange thing seen on this occasion was the discomfiture of the ecclesiastical authorities. The Pharisees and scribes were the doctors of divinity in the church. They represented orthodoxy and authority. Any departure from their traditions was a dangerous heresy, to be put down. They were waiting to catch Jesus, and the moment he said, "Man, thy sins be forgiven thee," they thought they had him in their trap. Instantly they began to say, "Who is this that speaketh blasphemies? Who can forgive sin, but God alone?" It was nothing to them that a man had been healed: a point in their theology had been violated.

Intense excitement ran through the crowd. The Pharisees had Jesus in a corner. He had been caught, so to speak, in the act. The church now had him in its grip and was about to brand him as a blasphemer. His hour was come.

Sure enough, it was come, for Jesus suddenly turned the tables on the Pharisees and threw them into confusion. As proof of his power over

the man's sin he showed his power over the man's body, and at his command the paralytic got up and walked off with his bed.

Then the people were amazed at the strange thing. They had been accustomed to seeing the Pharisees having everything their own way, with no one daring to utter a word of dissent. But here they were suddenly discomfited and discredited by this marvelous young Teacher. The church had been contradicted and refuted, the church had been shown to be wrong and standing in the very way of salvation, and the disclosure shocked the people as a strange thing.

This same strange thing has often happened since and may easily happen again. We reverence the church as a source and means of truth and righteousness, and it is proper that we should. We expect the church to be right, and it generally is. But the church is human in its administration and on particular points and occasions it may be wrong. It has sometimes stood in the way of truth and righteousness.

We are not, then, to worship the church or stand up for its infallibility, but we have a right to test its wisdom. The Word of God is our standard, and Christ is our only Master. It would be a strange thing if the church were not sometimes wrong.

IV. The fourth strange thing seen that day

was a forgiven sinner and healed man. The four friends brought the paralytic to Jesus for the healing of his paralysis, but Jesus at first took no notice of his disease; he looked at a much deeper matter and said to him, "Man, thy sins be forgiven thee." He passed through the outer tissues of the man's trouble into the inner core and cause of his whole condition. It was a strange thing to hear him say this, for men thought he ought to begin with the outer trouble or disease and work inward.

It is still a plausible theory that we ought to begin with men's physical and social needs, give them better employment and higher wages and more sanitary houses, and then develop in them a better moral and spiritual life. But this theory reverses the relations of cause and effect, and the place to begin is at the fountain in the heart, out of which are all the issues of life.

It was a strange thing for Jesus to begin with sin and presume to forgive it, for what authority had he to do this? "Who can forgive sins, but God alone?" exclaimed the hostile Pharisees, and they were right in their theology. Their only mistake was in their application of it: they did not see that Jesus was the Son of God, their own promised Messiah, with full power to forgive sin.

Jesus has this power, and his work down

through all these centuries proves that he has it and countless witnesses bear testimony that he has forgiven them.

He started with sin in the heart, yet he did not stop there, but sent his healing virtue through all the nerves of the paralytic and stood him up on his feet and sent him walking to his home. A pure heart will send its strength and bloom and beauty through the whole life as healthy bones and blood shoot splendor into the eyes and plant roses in the cheeks.

Within the walls of the church men are to be healed of their sins and out of its doors they are to come walking on their own feet to set in order the home and the community and the state and the whole world. If the church does not do this work, it is not in the same business with Jesus Christ, and has no right to his name.

If such things as these are done in the church, people will not think it a dull and unprofitable place, but will find it the center and source of their greatest interest and fullest life and will crowd into it. Strange things are what we all want to see. If the Spirit of God is poured out upon our churches they will throb with new life and all the people will be amazed and glorify God.

CHAPTER IX

EATING AND DRINKING WITH PUBLICANS AND SINNERS!

This was one of the dreadful charges brought against Jesus by the Pharisees and scribes—dreadful in their view, but one of the crowns which they thought they pressed on him full of thorns and which have become crowns of honor.

Jesus had just called Matthew from his table where he sat carrying on his business of collecting the Roman taxes, a business which was regarded as unpatriotic and treasonable by the Jews, so that the very name of publican or tax-gatherer threw them into a frenzy of fury. We know not how much the humble and hated publican knew of Jesus, but of him it is nobly recorded that "he forsook all and followed him."

In the estimation of the Pharisees and scribes Jesus could not have done a worse thing than call one of these despised men as his disciple, and from a worldly point of view it did seem a fatal blunder.

But it is written, and time and again has it been proved, that not many wise and mighty and noble are called, but that God chooses the weak

and base and despised things of the world to "bring to nought the things that are"; and this was illustrated in the case of Matthew, for this despised taxgatherer turned out to be one of the immortal biographers of his Master and his hand has helped to shape the centuries.

I. Matthew celebrated his calling as a disciple of Jesus by giving a feast to which "many publicans and sinners" were invited. By the word "sinners" as thus coupled with publicans is meant those of ill-reputation, social outcasts.

Matthew evidently thought that being called as a disciple of Jesus was an occasion of joy, one of the happy turning-points and gladdest hours of his life, and so he signalized it with this festival. And either by a suggestion from Jesus or by an instinct of his own as to the kind of people that would be welcome there, he turned from the rich and self-righteous and self-satisfied to those who would be more receptive of the glad news Jesus had to give. Matthew held this feast in his own house, doubtless in the court open to the public view, and so passersby could look in upon it and note the nature of the gathering.

II. It was at this point that "scribes and Pharisees," whose eyes were everywhere peering into the manners and morals of people to see that they conformed to their own traditions,

"when they saw that he was eating with the sinners and publicans, said unto his disciples, *How is it* that he eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners?"

We must imagine that these words were spoken with proud lips and scornful eyes and in contemptuous tones. These self-righteous religionists were dreadfully shocked and scandalized at the scene and stigmatized it with their deepest condemnation.

Now, there is a way in which we may meet and mingle with people of low reputation and immoral lives that merits repudiation and rebuke. When one associates with such people so as to descend to their own level and be one with them in spirit and companionship, he puts himself into their class and under their condemnation.

But this was not the nature of the fellowship Jesus held with these people, and the Pharisees and scribes knew this. He associated with them only as a good man or woman may mingle with bad people, even the worst in the slums of a city, on the broad ground of human kinship in order to gain their confidence and lead them up into a better life.

Jesus mingled freely with all classes and conditions of people, and yet he was no more contaminated by them than is the sunlight that

mingles with murky fog or with the slime of a swamp. His real spirit and motive in meeting such people were never misunderstood by the Jews, not even by the scribes and Pharisees: they knew his personal purity, and their objection rested on quite other grounds. Their real ground of objection to publicans and sinners was that these people had not conformed to their traditional ceremonies and were outside of their religious caste.

III. Jesus boldly smashed through these ceremonial traditions and counted them of none effect in his relations with God and with men. His standards of judging men were moral and spiritual and not material and ritualistic. He associated with people on the broad grounds of humanity and not on the narrow exclusiveness of caste. His religious rites were not a thorny hedge to shut people out, but a door of hospitality to let them in. And so he ate with publicans and sinners notwithstanding the fact that they had not accepted the domination of the priests and performed the rites of the Pharisees.

The caste spirit has been erected by many religions and among many races into a wall of separation to keep people apart. It has divided humanity into warring factions and sown the world with discord and bitterness.

The same spirit takes the form of separation of the rich from the poor, the upper from the lower classes, the smart set in society from the unfashionable, the learned from the illiterate, and of other distinctions that do not rest on inherent worth. Many are the classes that scorn to recognize one another.

Jesus trampled on all such false distinctions and exhibitions of the caste spirit and met men on the ground of common humanity. His democratic spirit came out in his social relations, and in the universality of his human sympathies he would eat and drink with all men.

IV. This action of Jesus went still deeper than social good will. He believed there was worth in all men, even in "publicans and sinners." His very business in the world was not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance, and why, therefore, should he not go to them and meet with them? Let these sinners be ever so degraded and outcast, yet he saw in them the possibility of redemption and of good.

As the jewel polisher can catch the glint of a diamond in a rough, dull stone that an unpracticed eye would think a common pebble and a careless hand would cast away, so Jesus with his divine insight could discern a diamond in the rough in every human soul, a possible saint in every sinner.

He ate with publicans and sinners because of their possibilities, and eating and drinking with them was one of his means of approaching them and winning them to his fellowship. No man was so deeply sunk in the flesh that he could not hope to lift him into the spirit. Many were the sinners of every class and grade that were attracted by his gracious personality and power and transformed into his likeness.

It has ever been and is to-day one of the glories of Jesus Christ that he does eat and drink with sinners, the worst of them, not that he may go down to their depth, but that he may lift them up to his height. And the same spirit that he manifested should also mark us in our social relations. We should go down to all levels and be all things to all men that we may win their confidence and do them good.

CHAPTER X

JESUS AS A LAWBREAKER

In this scene (Matt. 12. 1–14) Jesus appears as a lawbreaker. One of the points at which he came into frequent collision with the Pharisees was the Sabbath. They pretended to guard the day with the most ostentatious piety and affected to be scandalized by his treatment of it as sacrilegious and lawless. They had overloaded it with rules and spun restrictions around it until its rest had become a terrible bondage.

Jesus boldly broke through these traditional regulations and made room in the day for liberty and life. Yet while destroying these human additions to the day he did not destroy the day itself, but observed its rest, conserved its sacredness, and perpetuated its obligation.

I. On this particular Sabbath Jesus and his disciples were passing through a grainfield. The paths and roads ran through the fields in this fenceless country, and there was nothing unusual in their doing this. The disciples were hungry and began to pull off heads of wheat and, rubbing out the grains in their hands, to eat them. The act was lawful (Deut. 23. 25) and would be innocent in any country and on any day.

But some Pharisees observed it, and this was their chance. They pounced upon the act as unlawful on the Sabbath. "Why do ye that which is unlawful to do on the Sabbath day?" It was a very small point, but the controversial ecclesiastic can often see a mote when he cannot see a mountain.

The command to do no work had been spun out by the Pharisees into a thousand petty prohibitions. "Grass was not to be trodden, as being akin to harvest work. Shoes with nails were not to be worn, as the nails would be a 'burden,' and a 'burden' must not be carried. A tailor must not have his needle about him toward sunset on the Friday, for fear the Sabbath should begin while he was yet carrying it." In the same way, "plucking grain was wrong because it was a kind of reaping, and rubbing off the husks was a sin because it was a kind of threshing."

These were "the traditions of the elders" with which the scribes "made the commandment of God of none effect." These were the "heavy burdens and grievous to be borne," which they laid "on men's shoulders but they themselves" would "not move them with one of their fingers," for they resorted to all sorts of subterfuges to evade them.

This is what religion runs into when it keeps

the letter and loses the spirit. Such regulations made it impossible to keep the Sabbath and smothered its rest under burdens heavier than daily toil. Doing too much may have the same effect as doing nothing.

The danger lurking in all religious ordinances is that they will grow so tight and hard that they will constrict the life out of religion itself. We must beware of adding human regulations to divine institutions. It is easy for us to mix up our own conscience with God's commandments.

The Sabbath is a day of rest and gladness, and we must not add to its restrictions until it becomes a burden grievous to be borne. This has been done in some communities and homes until the day was dreaded and the children were glad when it was gone.

II. Jesus met the objection with parallel cases. He put himself on common ground with his critics where they had to agree with him. The objection implied ignorance of their own Scriptures. Had they not read of David, how when he was hungry he went to the tabernacle and ate the shewbread, an act that was unlawful and sacrilegious for any but the priests? If David on the ground of hunger could override the law of the tabernacle, could not his disciples on the same ground pluck and eat grain on the Sabbath? This argument enlisted David on the

side of the disciples, and the Pharisees were silenced, for they did not dare question David.

In the same line, Jesus asked them if the priests did not work on the Sabbath in the Temple, and yet were guiltless. Might not One greater than the Temple do the same?

The principle of these cases is that lower needs must give way to higher necessities. Even if it had been admitted that plucking grain to satisfy hunger was a violation of the rest of the Sabbath, yet hunger was a higher necessity than rest and had to have its way. The presence of a higher law always overrides a lower. Gravitation must yield to chemical affinity, and chemical affinity to vital energy. Ceremonies must always stand out of the way of humanities.

III. Jesus now penetrated deeper into the matter and laid open the basal principle of the Sabbath. "But if ye had known what this meaneth, I desire mercy and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless." On another occasion (Matt. 9. 13) Jesus quoted this same Scripture to the Pharisees and they were continually missing its point. Its application in this connection is that the Sabbath is a day of mercy adapted to the needs of man and not a hard ordinance to which the needs of man must be adapted.

Jesus expressed the same thought in the say-

ing, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath." The day fits into human needs. It matches man as the air fills the lungs and the light matches the eye. The Sabbath is a mercy to man in that it gives him rest from toil. Were it not for its gracious presence and protection, the wheels of industry would never cease to turn and life would become an endless round and grind and toil, as in heathen countries.

The day is also a beneficent minister to the higher needs of man. He needs rest from the excitement and worry of life; he needs to be still, that he may look into his heart and see what manner of man he is; above all, he needs worship, forgiveness for sin, and fellowship with the Father and eternal life. The day was made to match these needs and it fills them full.

IV. The scene now shifts from the cornfield to the synagogue. As is ever the case, there were several classes of people there.

Jesus was there, as his custom was, to worship and teach and heal. The service was always made better by his presence, for he came with his heart full of the Spirit and his hand full of blessing. Next, there was a man there who had a withered hand. His infirmity perhaps had drawn him thither in the hope of receiving healing in the sanctuary where Jesus was.

There are always withered hands and burdened hearts in the church, though we cannot always see them. The church ought to have wide room and warm welcome for all afflicted ones, and it ought to have power to draw them in and to heal them.

Lastly, the scribes and Pharisees were there to watch Jesus "that they might accuse him." They were critics and fault-finders. Their sinister eyes gleamed with the hope of finding evil. "Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath day?" (Matt. 12. 9) was their point of attack. It might be that Jesus would dare to heal the withered hand on the Sabbath and they would catch him in the very act.

Blind to all good and watching only for evil, what a malicious spirit was that to have rankling in the heart in the very house of God! The carping, fault-finding, evil-hunting spirit is bad enough anywhere, but it is at its worst in the church.

V. To the captious question of the Pharisees Jesus made a conclusive reply. In the first case he appealed to Scripture; in this case he appealed to reason. He proposed to them the case of a man that had one sheep (implying relations of more than ordinary value and affection) and it falls into a pit on the Sabbath: if he be a man of humane instincts will he not lift it out? The

case was so reasonable that Jesus was willing to submit it to his most hostile critics.

No reply from the Pharisees is recorded, and perhaps they simply maintained that silence that gives mistrusting consent. They were afraid of the logic of this Man.

Then Jesus followed up his question with the crushing application and conclusion, "How much then is a man of more value than a sheep! Wherefore it is lawful to do good on the sabbath day." The fact that Jesus uttered this sentiment as an exclamation is itself a wonderful tribute to the worth of man. An exclamation is a thought that strains the expressive power of language until it explodes. The worth of man so crowded upon the consciousness of Jesus that he could not express it in a proposition, but broke out into an exclamation.

The gospel exalts the worth of man and is raising the level of its estimation all over the world. The Pharisees would have treated a man with less consideration than they would a sheep, but Jesus rescued religion from such inhumanity and subordinated its ordinances to human welfare.

The Pharisees were silenced by the argument of Jesus, but they were not convinced, for the conviction they were seeking was not the conviction of the truth, but the conviction of Christ.

Having cleared the way, Jesus was now ready for action. There stood the man with the withered hand waiting for healing. "Stretch forth thy hand. And he stretched it forth; and it was restored whole, as the other." By that act Jesus broke the Sabbath of the Pharisees, but he kept the Sabbath of the Lord. The Sabbath should be a day of healing with us. It should bring us into the sanctuary where Jesus is, that he may heal our withered hands and troubled hearts.

CHAPTER XI

A GRAVE CHARGE

Jesus Christ was charged by his enemies with being a drunkard! Could falsehood have gone further, or malice reached a lower depth of infamy? In this respect, however, Jesus stands not alone.

Almost all the prophets and great characters of humanity have had the grossest charges hurled at them. Socrates was accused of perverting the youth of Athens, Luther had scandals circulated against him, and Washington and Lincoln were objects of the bitterest vituperation. The poisoned arrows of human envy and enmity have ever loved a shining mark.

It is Jesus himself who reports this charge. "For John the Baptist," he said to the Jews, "is come eating no bread nor drinking wine; and ye say, He hath a demon. The Son of man is come eating and drinking; and ye say, Behold, a gluttonous man, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. And wisdom is justified of all her children" (Luke 7. 33–35).

Thus so little was Jesus affected by the scandalous accusation, so sure was he of his spotlessness and his future vindication, that he himself

reported the charge and thus caused it to be recorded in the Gospels and sent down through the centuries. The sunbeam is never afraid of being soiled by fog and smoke and does not endeavor to avoid them, but shoots straight on its way and slips through them unsullied.

I. The first point to be noted in this charge was the inconsistent and fickle attitude of these critics. Jesus illustrated their spirit and behavior by the whimsical conduct of capricious children in their play. When such children were solicited with a lively air, they refused to dance, and when the gay music was turned to a sad minor dirge they refused to weep. Nothing would suit them; they were bound to be contrary.

This fickleness, Jesus declared, explained the conduct of the Jews in their reception of John the Baptist and of himself. John came as an ascetic, and they would not have him, but charged him with having a demon, a popular way of explaining any real or apparent madness. Jesus, as if to meet their objection, came mingling in their social life, and they said he was a drunkard. Come as they might, the prophets of God were bound to be rejected by such people. Nothing could please them because they would not be pleased. There was a deep antagonism in their hearts against all the messengers and

messages of God, and, if not for one excuse then for another, they would reject them.

It is always easy to find fault when we will not be pleased. The preaching may be varied to meet the most fanciful and finical tastes, but it will never suit if there is secret opposition in the heart. It is no trouble for men to find excuses for not receiving the gospel if they do not want to obey it; any pretext will then be good enough. In whatever light Christ is presented to them they will turn away, for the real root of their actions is that they will not have this man to reign over them.

II. The charge of these Jews against Jesus was the perversion of a basis of fact. "The Son of man is come eating and drinking": that was the fact which Jesus himself admitted; "and ye say, Behold, a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber": that was their inference and perversion. They were not in a condition of mind to see the facts sharply and state them accurately, but they mixed them up with their own mental states, they colored them with their own prejudice and enmity; and thus they turned a sober and pure life into a scandal and painted the whitest character of history in the blackest colors.

This is in accordance with the psychological law that we see things, not as they are, but as

we are; that is, we necessarily perceive things through our own mental states as through a colored lens that tinges all the light that streams through it. This, however, does not relieve us from responsibility, for we are responsible for our mental states or disposition of mind and heart as much as for our separate judgments.

It is this evil light within us that is the source of much of the error and falsehood and vituperation among men. There is generally a basis of fact in these things; rarely is a lie ever "cut out of the whole cloth," but a patch of truth is taken and set in false connections and dyed in deceptive colors, and it is this element of fact that gives a lie its semblance of truth and its power to do harm.

A perfectly innocent word or act may thus be perverted until it wears the aspect of the gravest misconduct. Political slander and social gossip feed on this perversion of fact, turning a grain of truth into a mountain of suspicion and misrepresentation. It is our duty in judging others first to clear our own minds of any sinister motive or evil disposition in order that we may see clearly and judge justly.

III. The basis of truth in this charge against Jesus was that he came "eating and drinking": that is, he entered freely into the social life of men. He was not a hermit hiding himself in the

wilderness, nor an ascetic, denying himself the comforts of life and indurating himself to harsh physical conditions.

John the Baptist was such a recluse and ascetic, as he lived in the desert aloof from men, clothed in a rough robe of haircloth and eating locusts and wild honey. Such men have their place in the world, at least at times, and they have rendered service as prophets of protest against a luxurious and pleasure-loving age.

But Jesus did not belong to this type. He was a social man, living a full human life and mingling freely with all sorts and conditions of men. He not only retired into solitude for meditation and prayer, but he also sailed on the lake with fishermen, walked the country roads, preached in the villages and was familiar with the streets of the metropolis.

He opened his ministry by entering into the joys of a wedding festival, he sat at Matthew's feast, and attended a fashionable social function at the house of a wealthy Pharisee. He ate the customary food of men and wore their clothing, just as he spoke their language. He was emphatically a man among men, sharing their joys and sorrows and entering into their daily experiences.

Jesus thus knit himself into all human relations and conditions and was in all points tried

as they were, and was thereby enabled to win their sympathy and to save them from their sin.

It was this normal and many-sided but pure life of Jesus that these Jews perverted into their wicked charge that he was a man of dissolute habits and disreputable associations. Their wicked charge remains only as evidence of their evil hearts, but his life remains as our pattern and praise.

We also should live in the world, entering freely into its many-colored life, enjoying its pure comforts and pleasures, living in it as the happy children of God, and yet keeping ourselves unspotted from its evil.

IV. "And wisdom is justified of all her children," was the concluding remark of Jesus to the charge of the Jews. John and Jesus, though so different in their methods, were both right.

Wisdom is varied in its manifestation and has many children. All truth is one, and yet it may be unraveled into many strands, as the white sunlight may be untwisted into all colors. All prophets do not come clothed in the same dress and speaking the same accents. God himself speaks at sundry times and in divers manners. His wisdom is "manifold" (Eph. 3. 10), many-colored, richly-variegated, as the Greek word means.

In nature God speaks through sunshine and through storm, through burning suns and through globes of dew. In revelation he speaks through shepherd and king, prince and peasant, prophets and apostles, through scholars and fishermen, and in these last days by his Son through whom streams the brightness of his glory.

His messages come to us as history and as prophecy, through proverb and poetry, as simple gospel and as sublime epistle. They come to us at times glowing warm and tender with love, and again they are edged with wrath and shoot the lightning of retribution.

They may reach us through the gorgeous ritual of the stately cathedral, or through the unadorned service of a plain meeting house. They may wear the garb of the Westminster Confession or of the Thirty-nine Articles. They may be tinged with the accents of Calvin, or of Luther, or of Wesley. They may be delivered to us by Episcopalian bishop, or Presbyterian preacher, or Methodist exhorter, or Salvation Army captain.

There is room in the kingdom for differing gifts and varied forms. No one creed or church has a monopoly of God's wisdom, and all these manifold forms are broken lights of him. All his messages and methods are necessary and good,

each beautiful in its time and justified of his children.

With so many voices speaking to us, we cannot innocently miss the message of life. And having received our message, we ought not to claim that it is the only and exclusive form of truth, but let divine wisdom speak to other souls as it will. For "God fulfills himself in many ways, lest one good custom should corrupt the world."

CHAPTER XII

A TRAMPLER ON TRADITION

"WHY do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread" (Matt. 15. 2). The question thus put to Jesus by the Pharisees and scribes does not seem to raise any vital point or portend any serious consequences; rather, it seems quite trivial and innocent; yet it is the spark of fire that kindled into white heat the whole issue between him and them; it is the gleam of the dagger with which they meant to pierce his heart.

I. The Pharisees and scribes had overlaid the teachings and rites of the law of Moses with an immense mass of minute refinements and requirements of their own. However at first these may have been intended to guard the law, they gradually hid and smothered the law and took its place as something infinitely more important.

These traditions acquired an authority far exceeding that of the Scripture. "It is a greater offense," said the Mischna, "to teach anything contrary to the voice of the rabbis, than to contradict Scripture itself." "The Bible was like water, the Traditions like wine, the Commen-

taries on them like spiced wine." These restrictions were spun around faith and conduct until they regulated life at every point and in its most trivial details.

The washing of the hands, to which the Pharisees referred in their question to Jesus, was not the ordinary cleansing of the hands, but a ceremonial requirement of the most complicated kind. Before eating, the hands had to be washed by an elaborate process involving many precise ways of holding them and pouring water on them and letting it drain and drip off them, which had to be most carefully and rigidly observed.

There were twenty-six rules for this rite in the morning alone, and to violate or neglect any one of them was declared to be a sin as bad as adultery or murder and worthy of death!

II. It is easy to see what would become of the spirit of religion when caught in such a system: it would be constricted to death. The outer material form gradually buried and crushed the inner spiritual reality. More and more care and importance were attached to mechanical forms and acts and less and less to spiritual states and deeds.

Not only so, but the mechanical form came to be used as a deliberate means to kill off spiritual life and as a mask to hide all manner of wicked-

ness. While the Pharisees were so punctilious and ostentatious in observing their own traditional inventions and were ready to persecute and even put to death anyone who dared to neglect them, they were robbing widows, refusing to support their parents, and reveling in all manner of iniquity. They were like sepulchers, outwardly white but inwardly full of dead men's bones.

This has ever been the tendency of ceremonial religion. History has repeated itself at this point again and again. While Christianity started as a simple spiritual system, yet it soon revived the process of elaborating the outward form and gradually grew into the most splendid spectacular system the world ever saw. The Temple at Jerusalem which Jesus swept away is outshone by Saint Peter's in Rome, that surpasses it many fold in material glory.

And still is it true that as the outer form grows in complexity and richness the inner spirit is likely to wane in purity and power. Ritualistic religion can hardly escape the tendency to put the shadow in place of the substance, to insist upon and trust in the outer form while the inner life grows worldly and proud, unspiritual and sensual.

III. What did Jesus say in answer to this apparently innocent question as to the practice

of his disciples? It seemed to be only a trivial matter of personal habit, but he discerned its true import and far-reaching consequences. It was a critical moment with him; he stood facing a temptation as perilous as that which assailed him in the wilderness. He must either yield to these Pharisees, or stand up squarely against them. His kingdom was at stake, and he faced the Pharisees as boldly as he had faced the devil.

"And he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition?" He then charged them with having set aside and violated one of the Ten Commandments of Moses, even the one bidding them to honor father and mother, with their cunning devices, again denounced them for having "made void the Word of God because of your tradition," and quoted Isaiah against them. Then calling the multitude he cried out, as if to all the world, "Hear, and understand: Not that which entereth into the mouth defileth the man; but that which proceedeth out of the mouth, this defileth the man." Not that which is outside a man and passes into his body can do him any spiritual harm; but that which is inside and comes out of his heart.

Thus Jesus boldly broke with the Pharisees and trampled upon their human traditions. He

would have none of their petty rules and regulations as a necessary condition of living a religious life.

It is true that he observed and instituted simple ordinances himself, but these were only means to an end and not the end itself. His kingdom did not consist in meat and drink, ordinances and ceremonies, images and incense and all the gorgeous spectacle of the stately temple or cathedral, but in righteousness and peace, a pure heart and a right life.

The answer he gave that day was a turning point in his career. It shattered the whole Pharisaic system and made him a terrible heretic. From that hour he was a doomed man in their eyes. So deeply were they wounded, so open was their resentment, that the alarmed disciples said to Jesus, "Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended, when they heard that saying?"

Jesus well knew the price he would have to pay, but he calmly answered, "Every plant which my heavenly Father planted not, shall be rooted up." He was teaching, not simply for that time, but for all time, and foresaw the final victory.

IV. Tradition has its place in religion, as in all things else. It stores up the accumulated experience and wisdom of the past and hands it

down to us as our precious inheritance. The race would never get forward if every generation had to begin at the beginning.

The Bible is simply so much tradition: it is the religious experience of the chosen people as recorded and interpreted for us by prophets and apostles. As such it is of immense value to us, saving us from fighting our way up out of heathenism and planting our feet on the summits of Christian truth and attainment won by illuminated and holy men.

Jesus himself used tradition. He did not cast away all that had been done by Moses and Isaiah and begin anew, but he adopted and adapted their materials; he introduced his religion, not by revolution, but by evolution.

Nevertheless, tradition has its limits and dangers. It is to be used as so much valuable material for further building, but not as a fixed and finished structure. It furnishes us with seeds and roots, but these are not to be kept from sprouting: they are to be made grow into their proper flower and fruit.

When tradition is used as a bond to bind our brains and constrict our hearts, when it becomes an artificial system of human invention and not a vital breath of the Spirit, then we are to break through and trample upon it that we may win our liberty and right to grow.

Tradition must always be tested by truth and life. It is only one of many means to an end and never the end itself; and that end is the kingdom of God within us, or an inner well of experience ever springing up into fresh life.

CHAPTER XIII

THE DEMAND FOR A SIGN

"THE Pharisees and Sadducees came, and trying him asked him to show them a sign from heaven" (Matt. 16. 1). Here the enemies of Jesus presented themselves before him wearing the mask of honest inquiry after the truth. They feigned themselves anxious to have all doubts swept from their minds by one convincing demonstration, and then they would yield to Jesus as their Messiah.

I. But whatever their outward appearance of sincerity, their mutual relations were against them. For the first time Pharisees and Sadducees combined against Jesus.

These two parties were mutual enemies. The Pharisees represented Jewish orthodoxy and patriotism, holding strictly to traditional Judaism and abhorring the Roman yoke, and the Sadducees were liberals and Roman adherents, holding loosely to orthodoxy and standing in with the Romans and enjoying worldly place and power. The bigoted Pharisees were as furious in their fanaticism against the Sadducees as they were against the Romans, viewing them as despicable heretics and traitors.

But on this occasion we find these two parties united in their attack on Jesus. The Pharisees were against Jesus because he trampled on their traditionalism, and the Sadducees were against him because they feared he would endanger their relations with the Romans and cause them to lose their offices. A common enmity thus made them friends.

Religion, like politics, sometimes makes strange bedfellows. Men of the most diverse interests and tastes and even of mutual enmity will unite to oppose a minister or a movement they dislike or fear.

II. The motive, also, of these enemies was wrong and incapacitated them for seeing the truth. They came tempting Jesus. Their object was not to know the truth, but to wreak their vengeance; not to understand the teaching, but to entrap the Teacher.

This motive made it psychologically impossible for them to be honest in their inquiry. Their feigned sincerity was only a mask on their faces and behind it lurked bitter enmity and even murder.

An open mind and sincere spirit is the necessary condition of knowing the truth in any field, but especially in religion. No amount of evidence will convince one who will not be convinced.

Faith in Jesus Christ is largely a matter of personal disposition and mood, humility and teachableness, and a sense of spiritual need. A bigoted mind and proud, worldly heart will be impervious to the kind of evidence and influence that brings a soul into harmony and fellowship with him.

III. These hypocritical inquirers further disclosed their real spirit by their demand for "a sign from heaven." Jesus had already performed miracles and they had seen some of them and acknowledged their genuineness. They had seen him heal a withered arm and cast out evil spirits, and had been forced to frame some theory for his miraculous power.

Still they were not satisfied. These works belonged to the earth and did not rise to the highest level of the miraculous. They believed that even devils could do such things. Why would he not give them signs in the sun and moon like Joshua, or fire from heaven like Elijah, or turn the sun back in its course like Isaiah? Let him show that the very stars would madly leap from their spheres at his bidding and they would believe on him!

Thus men whose hearts are not in sympathy with truth may seek further evidence to persuade them of what they will not believe. Dives in the parable thought that his brethren, who

would not believe Moses and the prophets, would yet believe a ghostly messenger from the lost. Many men still think they would believe if they were vouchsafed some startling prodigy on the earth or in the heavens.

But the trouble in such cases lies not in the evidence but in the state of mind and heart that will not see the truth. We can see only what we have affinity with, only what our natures will let us see, and when we have blind eyes no outburst of light, though it emblazon the heavens, will make us see.

IV. Jesus answered the inquiry of these Pharisees and Sadducees out of their own experience. He began with them on the ground right under their feet and led them on to a convincing conclusion.

They were weather experts and could discern the signs of the sky. A red evening sky meant fair weather the next day, but a red morning sky meant foul weather that day. They were shrewd at interpreting the meaning of these signs; "but ye cannot discern the signs of the times." They were keen-eyed and expert in the region of sunshine and cloud and rain, but were undiscerning and dull in the region of the moral and spiritual. Were there not signs enough around them in the decadence of their religion and in the bondage of their country to open

their eyes to their need of such a Teacher and Saviour as Jesus was?

It is often the case that we are looking up into heaven for a sign when signs more significant than would be a blinding light from the sky are written all around us. God is in the ordinary course of events as truly as in extraordinary happenings. The daily rising of the sun and the nightly march of the stars are as stupendous a sign and proof of his presence and providence as it would be if the sun were turned back in its orbit or the stars were to leap from their courses.

The whole web of events that make up our human world discloses a pattern of divine purpose, and every single thread is spun of divine law and love. The world rightly seen is not an opaque screen to hide God from us, but it is his transparent garment, or it is his very breath and will in which we live and move and have our being.

We need no signs of multiplied loaves or hushed stormy sea or halting sun or dead raised to life: we only need opened eyes to see the ordinary world and it will blaze before our discerning vision with the presence and purpose and splendor of God.

Men are often expert at reading the signs of the weather, or of the markets; they are keen and shrewd in business, or profound in their

knowledge of nature; they may unravel the sun and untwist the light from the farthest star, and yet be dull and blind to the great moral and spiritual verities of life. We need ever to pray that our eyes may be opened that we may see wondrous things.

V. Jesus "sighed deeply in his spirit" at this demand of his enemies and said, "An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of Jonah." It caused him a pang of sorrow to see men so deeply astray in their spiritual understanding and demands, so blinded by their own falseness. No such sign as they asked would be given them, for it would do them no good. No other sign would be given them than that of Jonah, and this sign was his preaching of repentance.

This shows us the valuation Jesus put upon his own miracles: they were not the vital factors in his ministry; they would not convert or even convince men. He used them, for they had their place, but he used them sparingly and kept them in the background. Had they been essential to the gospel, they would have been perpetuated down through the centuries; but they were employed only temporarily and then withdrawn.

The true and convincing and perpetual sign of the Saviourhood of Jesus Christ is his message

and ministry, his character and teaching, his forgiveness and healing, his truth and trust, goodness and gentleness and love, his sympathy and service and sacrifice. The great fact about him is not that he rose from the dead, but that he was what he was before and after he had risen, and that he is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

Jesus himself is the great sign God has given us that he has sent his Son into the world. Our great need is to get into sympathetic relations with him and see him as he is. If we believe not him, neither would we believe though the sun dropped from the sky or one rose from the dead.

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CHAPTER XIV

WHITHER WILL THIS MAN GO?

The boldness of Jesus in breaking with their traditions had now brought the growing suspicion and opposition of the Pharisees and scribes to a head, and they determined to seize him. Petty officers were sent to arrest him when he was present in Jerusalem at the Feast of Tabernacles (John 7), and the appearance of these policemen led Jesus to say to the Jews, "Yet a little while am I with you, and I go unto him that sent me. Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me: and where I am ye cannot come."

These strange words drew from the Jews the wondering exclamation, "Whither will this man go? . . . will he go unto the Dispersion among the Greeks, and teach the Greeks?"

I. Thus Jesus warned the Jews that he was going away from them and would leave them behind. They were the chosen people who had been trained for generations to receive the promised Messiah. Moses and the law, prophet and priest, temple and sacrifice, had been given to them as school masters to educate them into such spiritual preparation that they would be fit scholars for the coming Teacher or good soil

into which to drop the precious Corn of Wheat that was to produce the Bread of Life for the world.

But the children of a rich inheritance often fail to appreciate their privilege. The superior means and opportunities bestowed upon them swell them into pride in themselves and haughtiness over less richly gifted ones, blind them to their dependence and their duty, and lead them to misuse their inheritance and turn it into a means of destruction to themselves.

The Jews illustrated these fatal tendencies above any other people in the world. Carried up to the highest mount of spiritual privilege, their pride blinded them to their glorious opportunity and cast them down to the lowest depth of ruin and dishonor.

Yet their blindness could not stop the shining of the Light of the world. Jesus, their own Messiah, could not let the wheels of his chariot be blocked by their unbelief. If he could not go on with them, he must go on without them. The path of his duty and destiny was plain. The cross stood with outstretched arms just before him, but beyond it opened the gates into the City of God and home of his Father, and through those portals he would pass, though his unfaithful people could not follow.

The same fateful law still operates in every

field of life. Our inheritance will not save us if we are false to it; we may turn our very privilege to a curse, and Christ will leave the proud and disobedient behind in his onward march.

II. "Whither will this man go?" was the question that kept working in the mind of the Jews. They felt that he must go somewhere, that he had in him powers and destinies that would carry him beyond the ordinary into the unexpected and great. "Will he go unto the Dispersion among the Greeks, and teach the Greeks?"

Unwittingly they hit upon the very truth. The Dispersion was the body of Jews then scattered abroad in the Gentile world, and these Jews wondered if Jesus might go to them and thereby teach the Greeks themselves. They despised all Gentiles, as a less favored breed, and yet they could not have been wholly blind to the intellectual superiority of the Greeks. Might it be possible that this strange Prophet would leave them and go to Athens and Corinth and teach those brilliant people? Already they felt their special privileges slipping out of their own into other hands.

This is ever the fate of inheritance misused and of privilege turned to pride. The inheritance is scattered, and the special privileges and opportunities pass to others. This is often sadly

illustrated in the second generation of those who have suddenly become rich, and sooner or later special classes are put down and their power distributed among the people.

The judgment was frequently flung in the face of the proud, self-righteous Jews that publicans and harlots, the most despised and degraded classes, would pass into the kingdom of God and they themselves be shut out, and this judgment still awaits all those that are unfaithful.

III. "Will he teach the Greeks?" This is just what he did. The gospel could not be bound by Jewish unbelief and unfaithfulness, and immediately crossed the narrow confines of the Holy Land into the regions round about.

No sooner had it passed the border than it was among the Greeks, then the most gifted people of the world. Paul himself, the first apostle to the Gentiles, was born in a Greek city and was at home in the Greek language and literature and civilization. He passed through Asia Minor, populous with Greek cities, into Europe, and was soon standing in Athens and Corinth, and in these commanding centers of Greek culture and art was preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ. He commented upon the many religious altars in Athens and quoted Greek poets and adapted the gospel to the Greek mind.

It is true that some hearers scoffed, but others believed, and the gospel took root and began to grow on that soil. And what a rich soil it was and what fruitage it bore! In a short time a circle of Greek Christian churches shone like points of light around the eastern Mediterranean, and these were the first victories that led to the conquest of the Roman Empire.

Mightier still were the contributions of the Greeks to the spread and development of the gospel. It was largely on Greek soil and wholly in the Greek language that the New Testament was written. This most wonderful book in all the literature of the world began when Paul put his pen to parchment in Corinth to write his First Epistle to the Thessalonians, and it was ended in a Greek city when John finished his Gospel.

Thus the Jews were denied the privilege of putting a single book into the New Testament in their own language, and this immortal honor went to the despised Greeks. The Greek tongue, then the universal language of the world and the most beautiful language ever written, with its marvelous flexibility and facility for expressing every shape and shade of thought, and its mellifluous fluency and music and charm, became the wings that carried the gospel far and wide over that ancient world and brought it down to us.

The Greeks also made important theological and philosophical contributions to the development of the gospel and became powerful advocates and eloquent preachers of it. Thus the Jews spoke better than they knew when they said, "Will he go among the Greeks and teach the Greeks?" Verily, he did teach the Greeks and through them has taught the world.

IV. "Whither will this man go?" Still the question confronts us and still it is fraught with immense possibilities. Jesus Christ, having gone from the Jews to the Greeks, went on to the Romans, and by similar steps passed down through the centuries and out over the world. He marched through the mighty Roman Empire and brought every part of it more or less under his influence until a Christian emperor sat on its throne. He threaded German forests, and crossed Russian steppes, English moors, and Scottish highlands. He leaped the Atlantic and seized the Americas. He has been in the van in every enlargement of the world through exploration and discovery and through the spread of population.

Whither is he going to-day? He is striding across the scorching plains of India, invading the populous provinces of China, seizing Japan and all the islands of the sea, and penetrating the vast forests and densest jungles of Africa.

He is going everywhere around the globe, and no mountain fastness or obscurest valley or remotest island can escape his presence. All continents and climates, tropic heat and arctic ice, all racial lines and social classes, are indifferent to him—he is after human hearts and will go to the ends of the earth for a single soul.

This Man has in him boundless powers, a mighty passion of love, and he will go whithersoever he will. Yet his divine sovereignty is limited by human free agency, and the main personal question with us every one is whether he will come unobstructed and welcomed into our hearts, or leave us in our unbelief and pass on.

CHAPTER XV

AN INCOMPARABLE SPEAKER

When the officers of the Sanhedrin sent to arrest Jesus came back without him but with the report, "Never man spake like this man," they pronounced upon him a eulogy that still shines as a bright jewel in his crown. What are some of the points in which Jesus stands unique and unapproachable among men as a speaker?

I. His speech was marked by simplicity. Specialists invent technical terms to express their ideas and thus develop a vocabulary that may be unintelligible to the uninitiated reader or hearer.

Theologians have been much given to framing terms that are not understood by the common people. This theological language creeps into the pulpit and colors its sermons, and often darkens them with obscurity. Great preachers have been distinguished by their freedom from such terms and by their simplicity of style. To strike home to people through their own speech is an art that almost amounts to genius.

Jesus was preeminent in this art. His sermons were free from learned words and abstruse arguments, and were expressed in the vernacular of

everyday life. He had no religious cant, such as the Pharisees used, but spoke in the language of the home and the street. He talked about religion just as men talked about farming and fishing, so that the common people heard him gladly.

It takes a trained intellect to understand Plato or Leibnitz, but a peasant or a child can understand Jesus; and this simplicity has been a powerful factor in sending his words over the world.

II. The speech of Jesus was marked by popular effectiveness. Great thinkers are rarely good speakers. Immanuel Kant could not speak five words in public, and some of the most famous scholars would be dumb before an audience. Professor James, the most popular psychologist of our day, was exceedingly brilliant and eloquent with his pen, but he stumbled with his tongue.

Jesus was a great speaker in the sense that he was tremendously effective with a popular audience. He drew great crowds that hung upon his lips. The people thronged after him, and when he stopped on the seashore the gathering multitude soon crowded him off the beach into a boat, while it filled the vast amphitheater of the hills.

One secret of his power was his gift of popular exposition and illustration of religious truth. He drew his illustrations out of the lives and expe-

rience of his hearers. Field and forest and flower, fishing net and lost coin and bread were turned into preachers of his gospel and became luminous and eloquent with religious truth. This brought his teaching home to every one's business and bosom, and such teaching drew the people as a powerful magnet, and such teaching always will draw.

III. The teaching of Jesus was marked by originality. Most men simply repeat and reiterate what others have said and has become the common stock of knowledge. Practically all our thoughts are quotations from other minds; they were born in other brains and cradled in other hearts; we simply inherit and absorb them. A really original mind that creates new truth and kindles a great intellectual light in the world is exceedingly rare, perhaps not more than one in a hundred or even a thousand years.

Jesus was preeminently an original teacher. Although the germs of his teaching can be found elsewhere, yet he was strikingly original in his independence and intuition. The Pharisees were fossilized traditionalists, repeating over and over again what had been said by them "of old time" and never daring to say anything of themselves. Jesus boldly repudiated this traditional system and taught truth on his own authority. He did not hesitate to correct Moses and to set

himself above the prophets. His independence of spirit was magnificent, and he was thus the pioneer and paragon of all those that would think for themselves.

His originality was most deeply manifested in his intuitional insight into truth. He did not get his truth from others, not even from Moses and the prophets; did not deduce it by logical processes, constructing elaborate arguments to prove the truth; but he simply declared it. There is very little of what we call reasoning in the speech of Jesus, but there is a great deal of announcement. He looked directly into the heart of truth and then simply reported what he saw.

He did not reason about God: he knew God and spoke of him out of his personal experience of the Father. He did not speculate about immortality and gather hints and hopes of it after the manner of the Greek philosophers; but he knew the other world as he knew this world and spoke with the certainty and confidence of an eyewitness.

Jesus did not have to go back to Moses or to any other teacher to learn about religion: he was himself a fountain of religious experience and knowledge, and his highest authority was, "We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen."

This original experiential knowledge of religion, as contrasted with derived and traditional knowledge of it, is one of our greatest religious needs.

IV. The teaching of Jesus was marked by reality. Much of our religious speech is infected with unreality in the form of exaggeration, heated imagination, personal bias and partisanship, self-conscious coloring or conceit, and especially of cant, which consists in saying things which have become orthodox and conventional, but which we do not really know and feel.

Jesus was free from all unreality. He never taught anything because it was orthodox, or because his hearers believed it and expected him to say it; he never uttered a word for effect. All his speech was marked by transparent sincerity and earnestness, and this gave a tone of reality to his teaching. His hearers felt that what he was saying was the simple truth and there was no escaping it.

Another fact in his teaching that gave it reality was his constant appeal to the experience of his hearers. He did not bring down to them as out of heaven some high truth of a strange and foreign aspect which he tried to impose upon them, but he brought his truth right up out of their own hearts and lives. "What man of you"

does not know this, or would not do this? was a favorite form of appeal with him. He showed his hearers that what he was urging upon them in religion was just what they were doing in their own fields and homes.

Our preaching is in constant danger of slipping off the earth and escaping up into the air, whereas we should keep it down on the ground and make our religion as real as our business and bread.

V. The speech of Jesus was marked by sincerity. Human speech is a very subtle medium of expression and is quick to catch the faintest coloring of the soul. If there is any insincerity, deception, selfish or sinister purpose in the heart, however deeply it may be hidden and deftly it may be concealed it will affect the voice and ooze through the very features of the face.

No one can long be one thing in his heart and another thing with his tongue. "I cannot hear what you say," says Emerson, "for what you are." "No man," says Dr. Denny, "can give at once the impression that he is clever and that Christ is mighty to save." He may show himself clever or Christ mighty, but he cannot do both.

But when heart and voice are one the whole soul flows out in an undivided stream. Tongue and eye and facial expression tell one story and speak the total power of the man.

The same words may be uttered by two speakers with the widest difference in power, and this difference is rooted back in the souls of the speakers: the one may be a little soul, divided with insincerity and seamed with selfishness, and the other is a big soul, unified and molten with a single glowing thought and purpose. Speech comes out of such a soul, as the stream of molten metal out of a furnace, and burns its way into the hearts of hearers and fills them full, as the metal fills the molds.

Jesus was a great soul unified with absolute sincerity. With him heart and tongue, thought and words were one, and his speech came out in a solid glowing stream that flowed, mighty as a river yet gentle as a rivulet, into the hearts of his hearers and out over the world.

Sincerity is a necessary condition of power in any kind of speech, but especially is it necessary in preaching the gospel.

VI. The speech of Jesus was marked by symmetry. It was balanced and sane, running to no extreme and holding all parts of a subject at poise around its true center.

Most men are more or less one-sided and ill-balanced, running to one extreme or another, putting too much emphasis on one point or shading off another. So it comes to pass that we have contending parties and schools, conserva-

tives and radicals, on all subjects, each with its own little fragment or angle of the truth, and all clashing in general contradiction and confusion.

Hence also we have eccentric men and cranks who lose balance and fly off at all kinds of tangents. "How a man will do," says Horace Bushnell, "when he engages only in some one reform, acting from his own human force; the fuming, storming frenzy, the holy rage and tragic smoke of his violence, how he kindles against opposition, grows bitter and restive because of delay, and finally comes to maturity in a character thoroughly detestable—all this we know. But Christ, with all the world upon his hands, and a reform to be carried out in almost everything, is yet as quiet and cordial, and as little in the attitude of bitterness or impatience, as if all hearts were with him, or the work already done: so perfect is the balance of his feeling, so intuitively moderated is it by wisdom not human."

Standing at the center of all truth in calm poise, he held all elements in their perfect proportion and balance and judged righteous judgment.

VII. The speech of Jesus was marked by universality. All men are subject to the limitation of their age, race, and thought. Plato was Greek, Luther was German, and Lincoln was

American. No man can jump out of his own skin or escape out of the envelope of the age in which he was born. Paul was a Jew in the texture of his thought down to the last line he wrote.

Jesus Christ did escape these limitations and belongs equally to all ages and all classes and conditions of men. He was no parochial schoolmaster, but, standing on the shores of Galilee, the earth was his amphitheater and humanity his audience. He did not tie himself up to any temporal condition or theory, scientific, political, social or religious, but he uttered universal truths that are just as true and as adapted to our conditions to-day as they were adapted to the day in which they were uttered. His essential teachings can never go out of date and become obsolete, because they contain no temporal but only universal elements.

His teachings are also universal because they speak to the universal needs of men. Specialists always speak to a limited class of men or to a special fraction of man. The metaphysician and scientist speak to the intellect, the poet to the imagination, the artist to the æsthetic emotions; and thus Kant and Darwin and Shakespeare and Angelo touch each one only a fractional man. Especially do these men fail to pierce to the deepest needs of the soul and pour healing and life into its wounds.

Christ speaks to the total man. He touches the problems with which the metaphysician deals, enlists the interest of the student of nature, kindles the imagination of the poet, and draws from artistic genius its most glorious masterpieces of art. But especially does he reach our great practical needs, our sin and suffering and sorrow, and give us healing and life.

Because of his universality in the range of his audience and in the width and depth of his message it will ever be true that never man spake like this Man.

VIII. Finally, never man spake like this Man in power. The test of words is deeds. Speech that does not do anything is simply so much troubled air. "God said, Let there be light: and there was light": that is the kind of speech that counts.

Many men have spoken, but how few men have wrought? All really great speakers have been great doers. They spoke, and shaped their words into swords and shields and empires, into fortune, fame, and immortality. Greek orators spoke, and Asiatic hordes staggered back in confusion from their coasts. Roman generals spoke, and a world empire rose around the Mediterranean shores. Luther spoke, and the grip of papal despotism was broken. Napoleon spoke, and the Alps fell flat and the boundaries

of empires oscillated on the map. Lincoln spoke, and the fetters of the slave were shattered.

But there were some words these men of might could not speak. They could not speak pardon to a guilty soul and peace to a troubled heart.

Jesus Christ spoke, and the stormy sea grew still and the dead rose from their graves. He spoke, and the burden of guilt dropped off human hearts and souls were cleansed into purity and peace. He spoke, and the Kingdom of God began to rise in the world. He spoke, and old empires were lifted off their hinges and the stream of the centuries was thrown into a new channel.

He still speaks, and at his bidding ministers and missionaries go forth to preach his gospel, and churches, schools, and hospitals arise in every land. He speaks, and our whole civilization is being troubled and transformed with a new spirit that will yet cast out its evils and build it into the City of God.

All these points combine to prove the verdict of the Jewish officers that "Never man spake like this man." Such a Speaker has something to say to us that we should all hear and give to it our most earnest and loving heed. We cannot turn a deaf or indifferent ear to this Man and be as good as ever. In the Day of Judgment his words will rise up against us and condemn us. But, hearing him now, his words are spirit and life.

CHAPTER XVI

HAVE ANY OF THE RULERS BELIEVED ON HIM?

The officers who were sent to seize Jesus but returned without him, saying, "Never man spake like this man," received a cold reception and a haughty rebuke.

I. "Are ye also led astray?" demanded the Pharisees and scribes. "Hath any of the rulers believed on him, or of the Pharisees? But this multitude that knoweth not the law are accursed."

The whole speech breathes the air of proud contempt and scorn for these men. What right had they to any opinion on a religious subject which the rulers, especially the Pharisees, had not sanctioned? They were simply petty menials who had no other duties or rights than to accept the dictates and do the bidding of their superiors.

The word "multitude" which the Pharisees applied to them was a term of contempt, meaning the mob or vulgar rabble. Such a crowd was to be ruthlessly put down and kept down. That such men should be permitted to think and

speak on their own account was against all tradition and precedent.

Yet here were these petty officers presuming to tell the Pharisees what they thought of "this man," and even to declare their belief in his incomparable greatness as a speaker and to hint that he passed human limitations and rose into the divine. Such presumption was intolerable and must be rebuked and stopped. Let these vulgar fellows be made to understand their place and keep respectful silence in the presence of their superiors. Nobody has a right to believe or say anything until the rulers and Pharisees have spoken.

Such was ecclesiastical authority in that day, and such has it ever tended to be. Place and power of all kinds are apt to make men overbearing and despotic. "Authority intoxicates and makes men giddy, proud and vain"; and "man, proud man, dressed in a little brief authority, plays such fantastic tricks before high heaven, as make the angels weep."

But of all the different kinds of authority none seems to make men more haughty and imperious than ecclesiastical office. The hierarchical form of church government, developing into prelacy and culminating in the logical climax of the papacy, has illustrated this tendency. The early Christian Church gradually lost its democratic

spirit and forms and grew into a monarchical system that matched and rivaled that of the Roman empire. It usurped the right of private judgment and began to impose its dictates upon belief and conduct, finally setting upon these the seal of its infallibility.

It thus deprived the people of liberty of thought and bound the human brain with its dogmas. It became the greatest despotism of history and shackled the minds and consciences of millions of men and of nations.

The same tendency lurks in us; there is a little Pope in every one of us, and it is often hard for us to let others who differ from us think as they will.

II. Yet these rulers and Pharisees could not keep these menial servants down. They heard Jesus speak and were irresistibly captivated by the sincerity and truth and power of his speech and personality so that they could not but testify to the authorities that sent them to arrest him. "Never man spake like this man."

This was the early budding of private judgment, a bit of original thinking, the perception of their own minds, the conviction of their consciences. They had come into contact with Jesus at first hand and lost their sense of subjection to the rulers and Pharisees. Something of his Spirit passed into them and quickened their

minds and hearts so as to stir them into independent action. Despised and trodden upon as belonging to the ignorant and accursed "multitude," they suddenly stood upon their own feet, faced the Pharisees and defied their authority.

There was something brave and splendid in their action that day, and it was prophetic of the rise of the multitude against despotic authority and power that has been the great phenomenon of modern times. Though this spirit of ecclesiastical despotism fastened itself upon the Christian Church and bound it as with bands of iron, yet there was always in the common people a sense of its injustice and a feeling of resentment and revolt against it.

This lay concealed and silent for centuries and only occasionally found expression in some leader or scholar who stood up as a protest against it, until the hour struck when Luther thundered the truth of liberty into the ears of Europe. Then high and mighty prelates and Popes sneered at the "accursed multitude," who presumed to rise against their superiors, and launched their anathemas at them, but their power was shorn. Then men began to stand up and think and act for themselves. The same waves of revolt against ecclesiastical tyranny dashed up against the thrones of kings and they began to crumble and fall.

And so Popes and kings have not been able to keep the "accursed multitude" down. The common people have come to a sense of their rights and power and are exercising them in all fields. Out of the great deeps of humanity rise the most powerful movements in the progress of the race. No idea becomes big and potent until it lays hold of the people and gets their power behind it.

And all this unfettering of the people and arousing them to a sense of their right and might has been largely due to the speech and Spirit of the same "Man" that inspired these petty servants and made them brave to defy the rulers and Pharisees.

III. Not only could the rulers and Pharisees not keep the multitude from using their own judgment and believing on Jesus, but they could not keep the same spirit from invading their own circle and infecting their own members.

At this point Nicodemus spoke up in defense of the new prophet. "Doth our law," he inquired, "judge a man, except it first hear from himself and know what he doeth?" The inquiry was perfectly fair and is an illustration of how reasonable Christianity is in its whole teaching and spirit. Its invitation is, "Come and see," and it simply asks for a chance to make its precepts and promises good.

But this frankly reasonable inquiry only threw these bigoted Pharisees into a more terrible rage, and they turned upon Nicodemus with the bitter sneer, "Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and see that out of Galilee ariseth no prophet." Thus revolt against their despotism was breaking out in their own number, the new prophet was gaining sympathy if not converts among themselves, and it was already coming to pass that rulers and Pharisees were believing him.

And verily Jesus Christ has gained converts among the rulers of men from that day to this. Paul, another ruler of the Jews, and one of the greatest men of his age and of all ages, soon laid his splendid powers at the feet of Jesus and preached the faith he had once sought to destroy, and other great scholars and eloquent preachers in the early centuries followed in the same path. The gospel worked its way up from the peasant's cottage into the palace, and in three centuries a Christian emperor sat on the throne of Rome.

Jesus Christ has had influential rulers among his followers in every age, and in modern times many of the greatest leaders in every field of life, scholars, scientists, historians, poets, generals, statesmen, have humbly confessed him as their Lord.

No religion or movement could last that did not stand the test of reason and scholarship; thinkers rule the world in the long run, and this ancient sneer of the Pharisees, "Hath any of the rulers believed on him?" has been answered by a great chorus of wise men in all ages who have loyally believed on and followed him.

CHAPTER XVII

A WITNESS TO HIMSELF

"Thou bearest witness of thyself; thy witness is not true" (John 8. 13). The Pharisees flung this charge at Jesus. Is it a true principle of criticism and does it discredit him?

I. It is not a true principle of criticism and does not discredit him.

Witnessing to one's self is necessary and enters largely into life. One must pass judgment on himself. However he may escape the judgment of others he cannot escape his own conscience. He may deceive others, but deep in his own soul he knows his own truth or falsity, guilt or innocence. He is a direct inner witness to his own states and acts and knows the truth about them as no other human being can know.

It is true that one may in a degree pervert his own judgment of himself; it is subject to all the subtle influence and coloration of self-interest, prejudice and passion. Yet if he is an honest witness, if he has a soul of sincerity and truth, he guards against these disturbing elements and sees straight and clear; and though he is prejudiced and even deeply depraved he

still cannot be wholly blind to the truth about himself and knows his own guilt or innocence.

There are certain tests which others apply and which he can apply to his self-judgment, such as its consistency, candor, sincerity, and congruity with concurrent facts and subsequent consequences. When self-judgment stands these tests it is accepted as of high value.

One not only can and must bear witness to himself in the secrecy of his heart, but it is expected and often demanded of him that he bear this witness publicly. All investigators, thinkers, teachers, who wish to impart truth and influence men must publish their thoughts and give their reasons for them. It is expected of every man that when vital issues of life arise he proclaim his stand, and this is a form of bearing witness to himself.

And when a man falls under any charge or suspicion, great importance is attached to what he says about the matter himself. He is ordinarily expected, if brought to a judicial trial, to go on the stand and tell his own story. It is usually counted against a man when he refuses to do this. But if he goes on the stand and gives witness to himself that is clear and consistent and congruous with all known facts, he greatly strengthens his own case.

And so the fact that a man bears witness to

himself is not a just ground of criticism against him, but, if his witness bears the proper tests, it counts in his favor, and his witness is accepted as true.

II. It was necessary that Jesus should bear witness to himself. He came from the Father bearing a message of supreme importance to men. How else could he get his message before the world except by bearing witness to it himself? If Moses and Isaiah and Plato and all the prophets and thinkers of the world have illuminated it and moved it forward by publishing their own thoughts and thus bearing witness to the truth they held, must not the Son of God himself address the world in the same way and bear the same witness?

And as Jesus was himself the burning focus and power of his own message he had to disclose his personality and heart and let men see what he was. He therefore declared such fundamental truths as, "I and my Father are one"; "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father"; "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life"; "I am the bread of life"; "I am the door"; "I am the way, the truth and the life"; "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me."

These central vital truths had to be proclaimed by Jesus, or they never would have found entrance into the world. If other men had to utter their messages, much more was it necessary that he should tell the truth about himself. The supreme witness to the truth had to speak and to stand in the burning center of his own message, or he would have been unfaithful to the truth and to the world.

III. Jesus bears all the tests of the truth of his self-witnessing. He had direct inner knowledge of the truths he declared. "Even if I bear witness of myself, my witness is true; for I know whence I came, and whither I go."

He spoke out of his personal kinship and fellowship with the Father. He was no second-hand reporter, repeating rumors he had heard about God, and he was no mere theorizer spinning his own subjective web of speculation about the Infinite and the Absolute, but he could calmly say, "We speak that we do know, and bear witness of that we have seen."

Applying all our tests to his testimony, we find it bears them perfectly at every point. It is consistent from beginning to end. When challenged, "Who art thou?" he instantly answered, "Even the same that I said unto you from the beginning." He had no retractions or corrections to make, no revision of his state-

ments was needed to harmonize them, but they all joined nicely together and made one system of truth throughout.

His teachings bear the inimitable marks of reality. One cannot read them and feel that they are the inventions of fiction writers or the slow growths of legend or myth, but they breathe the air and speak in the tones of simple verity.

The sincerity and candor and honesty of Jesus also shine out through all his speech and spirit. He has none of the arts of a special pleader, has nothing to conceal, but is perfectly frank and open. His self-evident truth and honesty, purity and sensitiveness to right, serenity and sanity, self-control and balanced judgment, clear vision and simple speech, are the background of his witness to himself, the convincing proof that he is telling the truth.

"Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth." Jesus Christ had this sure approval of his own white soul, and we can trust such a Man, even when he tells us that he is the Son of God and Saviour of the world.

IV. Yet he was not a one in his witness, but could call majestic confirmation to his word. "Yea and if I judge," he said to the Pharisees, "my judgment is true; for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me. I am he that

beareth witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me."

How has this confirmation by the Father been given? It was given to Jesus in the inner assurance of his own fellowship with the Father; it was given at his baptism in the voice that spoke from heaven, declaring him to be God's own Son; it was given during his ministry in the many wonderful works that flowed from his hands and in his gracious words of healing and comfort, forgiveness and salvation; it was gloriously manifested in the great sign God gave him in raising him from the dead; and it was given him when at his ascension he went back to his Father and his heavenly glory.

And down through all the centuries God has confirmed the witness of Jesus Christ to himself and is still confirming it with seals that blaze before the world. His march of mercy and might through the ages, the works of healing that are flowing from his hands, the growth of the church, the spread of missions, the increasing infiltration of his Spirit into all our modern life —what are these but signs and seals that God is setting to the teaching of Jesus Christ that his witness is true?

It is plainly evident that the human Jesus is not alone in this world: some mightier Power is back of him, holding him up and bearing him on,

as the earth is held in its orbit and is illuminated by the mighty attraction and glorious splendor of the sun; and this Power is God in him. All these works confirm his words, "I am he that beareth witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me."

CHAPTER XVIII

WHO ART THOU?

THE Pharisees were deeply and increasingly perplexed and puzzled with the problem of the person of Jesus.

I. At first they disparaged and despised him as an unlettered provincial from Galilee and ridiculed the claim that he was a prophet. But they soon found that he could not thus be put down and had to be reckoned with.

Then they tried to suppress his teaching and beat off his followers by their official authority and power, agreeing that "if any man should confess him to be Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue," pouring all their scorn on incipient disciples and threatening them with the direst penalties.

But still he taught and found increasing favor with the people and still he wrought works that confounded them.

They had to account for him in some way and framed various theories to explain his personality and power. They charged him with being a deceiver and a blasphemer. A favorite theory put forth by them on more than one occasion was that he had a devil or demon. They believed

that an evil spirit or demon could take possession of a human soul and speak and act through it, and thus they attempted to explain the power of Jesus. Dreadful as the theory was, it was yet a forced confession from them that he could not be explained in simple human terms and had to be connected with the invisible world.

Even in their own view, prejudiced and blinded as it was with hostility and hate, he overleaped the limits of human personality and drew his knowledge and power from a supernatural source. But all their theories sooner or later broke down and left them in helpless and hopeless confusion.

II. At length the Pharisees stood before Jesus utterly baffled and bewildered and with pathetic perplexity exclaimed (John 8. 25), "Who art thou?"

It is a question of the greatest interest. We are always interested in persons more than in things. Much as we wonder at a great natural phenomenon, such as a new star flashing out in the sky, much more do we wonder at a great personality that blazes forth in our human world. When a great man passes out of the world it is often debated for generations who he was, what was his true character and the real value of his work. We are just beginning to find out who Lincoln was and what was Washington.

The world is not yet done wondering at Napoleon, and it has taken a long time to settle Cromwell's place in history.

The question "Who art thou?" rises to its supremest interest in the person of Jesus Christ. For nineteen centuries it has been growing in magnitude until it has overshadowed all others. No matter what view is taken of him, Jesus has become the central Figure of the world. History has been shaped by his hand. His name fills libraries, and we cannot date a letter without paying a tribute to him.

Controversy over his person passed from his enemies among the Jews to his friends in the church. The early church was divided over conflicting theories, some theologians going to one extreme and denying his divinity and others to the other extreme and denying his humanity; but the church catholic settled down on the middle ground and affirmed he was of complex personality, embracing both human and divine natures.

The modern world is not less interested and still gives various answers. Every possible attempt is still made to cast Jesus Christ in a human mold. Theories are constructed to account for him by heredity and by the peculiar juncture of affairs in his time. But he invariably escapes such limits into the illimitable and absolute.

It is impossible to account for the vast shadow he has thrown across these twenty centuries by one of human stature standing back there in the first century. We must there find a taller Figure, even One who transcends the human and rises into the divine.

III. What answer did Jesus himself give to this question? Instantly he answered, "Even the same that I said unto you from the beginning."

The answer at first sight seems vague and unsatisfactory. Why did he not give them a positive and plain assertion of his divinity that would have been final? Because he had plainly told them more than once already, and they believed not his witness. Would they believe if he were to tell them again?

How often must Jesus Christ tell us a thing before we believe him? When, after healing a man on the Sabbath, Jesus said, "My Father worketh hitherto and I work," John (5. 17) says, "For this cause therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only brake the sabbath, but also called God his own Father, making himself equal with God."

There can be no question that on various occasions Jesus did with the greatest positiveness and plainness declare his divinity and his equality with God. The whole character of

Jesus in its absolute purity and honesty is pledged to his divine Sonship; and if we believe him on any point, we must believe him on this. Later on in this same conversation with the Jews he calmly said, "Before Abraham was, I am," and thereby lifted himself above the temporal into the eternal and sat down on the throne with God. Plainer testimony from holier lips we could not have.

IV. This answer of Jesus is in itself an instance and proof of his truthfulness. He told the Jews the simple fact about himself in the beginning and had nothing different to tell them in the end. He had nothing to add to or take from his first message. He was not trying to impose on them a fiction or falsehood and therefore did not have to patch up a new story with every change in the situation.

Only truth is consistent with itself, and fears no surprise or unexpected turn of affairs, but falsehood must ever be on the lookout for some sudden irruption that may throw it into confusion. A lie sooner or later runs up against a fact which it will not fit, and must then invent another lie to make things hang together.

We should only tell such things in the first place as we can tell in the last place, even when we stand before the bar of God. Jesus always told the simple truth, and we can trust him in

all his precepts and promises, even in those that determine our destiny in time and in eternity.

V. This answer also implies and proves the unchangeableness and finality of the teaching of Jesus. What he says now is even the same that he said in the beginning.

Great changes have swept over the world since his day. The world has been turned upside down a hundred times. Great empires have risen into splendor and fallen into dust. Religions by the score have vanished. Whole families of sciences have perished, and a hundred new ones have been born and grown into giant power. Theories that were once held as axiomatic have been exploded as childish. Books have fallen into oblivion as snowflakes into the sea. Men are ever changing their plans, modifying their views, reconstructing their sciences, rewriting their books.

If it were possible for any great teacher of the past to return, would he reassert his former teaching? Would Newton still hold to the emission theory of light, and Ptolemy reaffirm that the earth is the center of the solar system? Would Plato still teach that sickly infants should be exposed in the mountains to perish? If we could ask them, "What are your views as to the world and life?" would they answer,

"Even the same that we said unto you from the beginning"? No, these great minds would say, "In the light of your wider knowledge we must correct our mistakes and revise our views."

But if this test were applied to Jesus Christ and he were asked, "In the light of all these immense changes and progress in human knowledge, what now are your teachings on the great questions of life?" his answer would be, "Even the same that I said unto you from the beginning."

"What," we might exclaim, "have all the researches of science, the investigations of Newton, the discoveries of Darwin and the speculations of Spencer, that have wrought such revolutions in human thinking, not changed your gospel?" "Not a word," would be the answer.

"But," we might persist, "have not all the assaults of skeptics, the scoffs of infidels, and new theologies of advanced thinkers changed at least one word?" "Not a jot or tittle," would be the answer.

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever, and what he said in the beginning he says still. We change our views and rewrite our books and reconstruct our whole civilization, but Jesus Christ calmly says to the twentieth as he said to the first century, "Heaven and

earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."

The old gospel still lives and not a word of it has perished. Christ alone has words of eternal life, and in following him we shall receive the promised reward in this world and at last an eternal crown, even the same that he said unto us from the beginning.

CHAPTER XIX

WHOM MAKEST THOU THYSELF?

EVERY man does in some degree make himself. What he thinks he is and desires and strives to be enters vitally into his growth and realization.

Jesus himself was subject to this law, and grew toward what he believed himself to be. The Pharisees, therefore, struck a deep secret in his character when they challenged him, Whom makest thou thyself? The question grew out of a prolonged controversy (John 8. 31–59) in which the Pharisees thrust at Jesus with many sharp interrogatives, and he in turn gave them frank but masterful replies that told them and told all the world in varied terms who he is as defined and determined by himself.

The passage is an autobiography of the inner life and divine relations and nature of Jesus Christ.

I. Jesus declares his sinlessness. "Which of you convicteth me of sin?" was his triumphant challenge. In a world of sin, enveloped in its clouds of evil and beaten upon by its storms and lightning flashes of hate, he yet was unspotted in the whiteness of his own holiness. As the sunlight is unsullied by the murky atmosphere

through which it slips, and unstained by the slime on which it falls, so did he pass through this sinful world in unsoiled purity.

What is the proof of this? First, the testimony of his own enemies. This challenge was issued to his enemies in the very heat and passion of their hatred, and yet they answered him with never a word of accusation. Had they known aught against him, they would at this moment when he exposed himself to them have struck back with some keen and convincing charge.

Next is the witness of his friends. His disciples lived in intimate companionship with him for three years and saw him when he was off his guard, ate and slept with him, listened to his private conversation and heard his very prayers, and they testify, "We beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father."

We have the witness of Christ's own consciousness. In proportion as the soul grows white is it sensitive to its own sin, and Jesus, admittedly the purest soul the world has ever known, never felt any slightest self-accusation disturb his perfect serenity and peace. His character stands out in his recorded life without flaw and is the praise of the ages. All witnesses and tests agree as to his sinlessness, and this fact is the first answer to the challenge, "Whom makest thou thyself?"

II. Jesus is the truth. "I say the truth," he declared to the Pharisees.

Truth is a primary element of character and virtue of life, for it is the bond that holds character together in its integrity and is the necessary basis of all social trust and life. "God who cannot lie" is one fundamental attribute of the Eternal, for without this element at the root of his being the universe would be false to the core and would fall to pieces.

Jesus knew the truth and lived the truth. There was no element of exaggeration, misrepresentation, deception, partisan coloring or any kind of unreality in his words, but they fit and reflected reality as the placid lake mirrors the blue sky. What he said first he said last, and never needed to change or adjust his words so that they would hang together in perfect coherency.

He not only spoke the truth, but he could calmly say, "I am the truth," the embodiment of truth, the truth alive and in action. And therefore he was the norm of all truth, the standard to which it must conform, the principle by which it must grow, and the ideal toward which it must strive.

Such a Teacher has something to say to us of infinite worth, and can be trusted in his every word, even when he tells us our destiny or

declares that heaven and earth shall pass but that his words shall not pass away.

III. Jesus in this controversy with the Pharisees emitted several deep flashes of light into his relations with the Father. "I speak the things," he said, "which I have seen with my Father"; "I came forth and am come from God"; "I honor my Father"; "I seek not mine own glory"; and "I know him, and keep his word."

Some of these sayings look back into his eternal relations with God, and others of them relate more directly to his human relations with the Father. They may be summarized in the saying, "I know him, and keep his word."

Jesus knows the Father in the intimacy of faith and fellowship. As a human father and son of fine kinship and fellowship know each other perfectly, their unspoken thoughts penetrating each other and blending their souls in sensitive unity, so, only in an infinitely deeper way, the divine Son knows the eternal Father.

Jesus also knows the Father through obedience. Because he knows his Father he keeps his word, and because he keeps his Father's word he knows him. Obedience is the great teacher of truth in all the lines of life, and it is a bond that binds every true son to his heavenly Father.

Because Jesus thus knows the Father he can

reveal the Father to us and say with sure and calm confidence, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."

IV. Jesus rose to the highest revelation of his being when he declared his relation to Abraham. The Pharisees were deeply puzzled when he declared, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it, and was glad." How could one not yet fifty years old utter such a saying?

Jesus solved the mystery by his profound saying, "Before Abraham was, I am." Here he lifted himself out of the temporal sphere of being into the eternal; by one mighty stride he stepped out of time and space into the timeless and infinite world.

Such a saying falling from the lips of a mortal man would be instant evidence and proof of unbalanced judgment.

But no one would suggest such an explanation in the case of Jesus. Whatever may be said of him, he never loses his poise and balance, his sanity is never doubted, and his sublimest sayings seem perfectly rational and natural as coming from him.

In this saying there can be no question that he asserts his transcendence of human nature and his true deity. Here is a glimpse at least of his omniscient consciousness in which the limits

of time and space fade out and he comprehends the centuries in one timeless pulse of thought and flash of vision. It is because of this divine relation with God that he can show us the Father and is mighty to save.

V. This saving power of Jesus Christ is brought out in his own saying in answer to the Pharisees on this occasion: "If a man keep my word, he shall never taste of death."

Keeping the word of Jesus Christ as the Son of God is equivalent to keeping the words or laws of God himself, and these laws are pure life. Sin is lawlessness or disobedience to the laws of life, and by its very nature turns these laws into means of death.

The same sunlight that builds up a living plant tears down one that is dead: the same train that carries its passengers in speed and safety to their destination crushes him who stands upon its track. So the same words or laws of life that conserve and enrich the life of one that obeys them necessarily destroy the life of one that tramples upon them.

The words of Jesus are the eternal laws of life, and in keeping of them there is the great reward of life more abundant, richer and sweeter, and everlasting. This is the meaning of his saying that one that keeps his word shall never taste of death: not of mere physical death, which may

be birth into larger life, but that death of soul which is the penalty and self-destruction of sin, and from which the soul is delivered into eternal life through fellowship with Christ.

Thus in answer to the challenge, "Whom makest thou thyself?" Jesus declared himself to be sinless, truthful, intimate with God, eternal, and a Saviour of men.

CHAPTER XX

A DOER OF MIRACLES

The question as to whether Jesus worked miracles has from the beginning been a critical one in the history of Christianity. There have always been those that stumble at any extraordinary variation from the regular course of nature and hold that miracles, once a chief evidence of Christianity, have now become its most serious burden and hindrance.

But believers in the Gospels and in the divinity of Christ hold that his miracles are supported by proper and sufficient evidence and are the natural, if not necessary, manifestation of his divine person and power.

Did the priests and Pharisees, whose hostile judgments we are considering, express themselves on this question? They did so express themselves on several occasions.

In the beginning of the ministry of Jesus, Nicodemus, one of their number, though he was not an enemy and in time became a friend of Jesus, opened his famous night interview with the young Nazarene prophet by declaring, "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come

from God; for no man can do these signs that thou doest, except God be with him."

Near the end of his ministry Jesus became engaged in a controversy with the Pharisees in Jerusalem over the man born blind whose eyes he had opened. They knew this well-known man and saw him after his vision had been restored and tried to extract from him by their heckling examination some admission that would invalidate the miracle, for they were keenly conscious of its damaging effect upon their cause. The Pharisees fell out among themselves over the case. "Some therefore of the Pharisees said, This man is not from God, because he keepeth not the sabbath. But others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such signs? And there was a division among them."

The same question arose among the Pharisees in connection with the raising of Lazarus from the dead. That miracle produced a profound effect in Jerusalem, and they saw its dangerous consequences to them. "The chief priests therefore and the Pharisees gathered a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many signs. If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him: and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation."

I. It is thus evident that the miracles of Jesus were well known to his enemies and were in-

vestigated by them and gave them the most serious concern and alarm. They did not rest on the mere sensational rumors that were floating around about them, but in the case of the restored blind man they examined and cross-examined both him and his parents. The Pharisees saw that these signs were making a deep impression on the people and were drawing many after Jesus as his disciples; such wonderful works were even in danger of precipitating a religious and political revolution that would attract the attention and call forth the action of the Romans, who would come and cut up the whole trouble by the roots by eradicating the pestiferous Jewish nation; and thereby these Pharisees and priests would lose their "place," which was their chief concern. They suddenly realized that Jesus was sweeping everything before him and that they were doing nothing effective to stop him. This is what led them to exclaim, "What do we? for this man doeth many signs. If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him: and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation."

We thus have in this testimony of these priests and Pharisees their witness to the fact that Jesus was working miracles that were creating widespread popular faith in him and causing excitement that they thought might get beyond

their control and result in national disorder and peril to themselves. They did not deny his miracles, but frankly admitted them and acknowledged their impotence to stop their influence.

His enemies being judges, these miracles of Jesus were not done in a corner but under the light of the fullest publicity and they put their own seal on their reality.

II. It may be said, however, that the belief of the Pharisees and priests in miracles has little value because such belief was common in their day and alleged miracle workers were plentiful, and therefore that such testimony only establishes the existence of traditional credulity and superstition as to miracles, which now rather discredit than support such belief.

But this contention will not stand. Miracles, whether real or only alleged, were not common occurrences among the Jews and accepted as a matter of course. They are scarce events even in the Old Testament, and had long ceased with the passing of the prophets. It is expressly said of John the Baptist that he "did no miracle," and there is no record of a miracle-working prophet or even pretender in the time of Christ.

Even Jesus was parsimonious in the use of such signs, performing them rarely and keeping them in the background and sometimes regard-

ing them as hindrances rather than helps in his ministry. The impression often entertained that miracles abound in the Bible and that they just dripped from the fingers of Jesus is wholly wrong. They are surprisingly few in number, which fact is one evidence of their genuineness, for had they been inventions or myths they would have been plentiful enough to satisfy the most pious curiosity.

The Jews, then, were not fed on miracles to the point of satiation, so that it was easy for them to believe in them and almost any pious pretender could delude them. No, they had not seen any wonders wrought by any other prophet than Jesus, and their belief in his miracles was not due to expectation and credulity in connection with such things.

III. On the contrary, the hostile attitude of the priests and Pharisees to Jesus made them skeptical of his miracles and would have led them, had it been possible, to deny their reality. To concede his mighty works was to give him the strongest attestation and credentials in their power, setting their own seal on all his claims. They well knew the effect any such acknowledgment would have on his standing with the people. To admit the miracles was to admit the logic and conclusion of Nicodemus: "We know that thou art a teacher come from God."

We would have expected, then, that the Pharisees would have resorted to every means of discrediting the miracles, casting doubt on them or denying their reality. On one occasion they did try to throw on him the odium of casting out devils by the power of Beelzebub, thus putting him in complicity with the devil himself.

But on this occasion they did not dare do this. The miracles of Jesus, now near the end of his ministry, had become too well known and too certainly established. The opening of the blind man's eyes, and especially the raising of Lazarus from the dead, had excited wide interest and wonder in Jerusalem. If the priests and Pharisees were to deny or seek to discredit these miracles, they would expose themselves to public refutation and ridicule.

They knew better than to run this risk, and therefore, in spite of their hostility to Jesus and in the face of the danger of strengthening his claims and of increasing the growing popular faith in him, they made the almost despairing admission, "What do we? for this man doeth many miracles." On no other ground than the reality of these works can we account for this acknowledgment of his enemies.

Thus the priests and Pharisees did the very thing they feared they were doing in this admission: they strengthened faith in Jesus and they

sent down to us their testimony in the reality of his mighty works. His enemies being judges, he did do things transcending human power. Those who were bent on destroying him yet felt their impotence in his presence, and in this utterance they again crowned him with divinity.

IV. The testimony of these enemies of Jesus to his miracles is not of such an incidental nature that it could be dropped from the narratives without impairing their integrity; for it is so interwoven into their texture that it is an essential part of their structure. The whole interview of Nicodemus with Jesus would be left without an explanation of his visit if his opening remark were exscinded that Jesus was proved by his miracles to be the Son of God.

In a similar way the entire narrative of the raising of Lazarus from the dead will have to be removed from the New Testament if the resulting admission of the Pharisees that "this man doeth many miracles" is rejected.

More conclusive still is the case of the opening of the eyes of the man born blind. This narrative bears marks of being a record of sober reality and has none of the indications of invention and legend. It is detailed in its account, violates none of the proprieties of the occasion, and gives us the conviction that it is based on fact. Yet the Pharisees, after vainly trying to extort

from the restored man some admission adverse to the miracle, were driven to acknowledge its reality, and then attempted to break its force.

Thus the testimony of these enemies of Jesus to his miracles cannot be removed by the simple process of dissecting them out of the narrative while leaving the incidents themselves in the record. Their testimony is so inextricably interwoven with the entire web of the narrative that we must accept it or else reject the whole story of these controversies; and yet the controversies of Jesus with the priests and Pharisees are among the most trustworthy portions of the Gospels.

There are other and stronger reasons for believing in the miracles of Jesus as normal and necessary manifestations of his divine person and mission. But the testimony of these enemies adds the peculiar weight of their unwilling witness in which they are compelled against their own interest to declare: "This man doeth many miracles."

CHAPTER XXI

THE WORLD IS GONE AFTER HIM

The morning of the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem opened with promise. The beauty of the scene furnished it with a fitting setting. It was the springtime and a mass of fresh color lay palpitating on the landscape. The vivid green grass, embroidered with early flowers, carpeted the valleys, the dark green of the olive vineyards covered the hillsides, the air was balmy and fragrant, along the eastern horizon ran the blue line of the Mountains of Moab, and over it all flashed the splendor of a Syrian sky.

From the summit of the Mount of Olives the city broke upon the view. It sat like a jeweled crown on the brow of Mount Zion. In the foreground rose the marble walls of the Temple of stainless whiteness with its gilded roof that flamed in the sunlight, a mass of snow and gold; and in the background stretched the streets and squares of the city and upon it lay the spell of a thousand years of patriotic and sacred associations.

Jesus himself rode upon a colt gayly caparisoned with the many-colored robes of his

disciples, and the roadway itself was bestrewn with greenery and the garments of the people, while the multitudes sent their hosannas rolling out over the hills and valleys. It was a joyous hour and it seemed that Jesus was about to receive his rightful coronation. Everybody for once seemed happy.

I. Yet Jews were there that were never known to be happy in the presence of Jesus when he was receiving any service and honor. "The Pharisees"—how constantly do they turn up on every such occasion to obtrude their objection and opposition—"The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, Behold how ye prevail nothing; lo, the world is gone after him."

Bitter envy and enmity breathe out their evil spirit and hissing hate in these words. We can easily imagine the tightly compressed, scornful lips and close-set grinning teeth that contemptuously spat them out. But again they never spoke truer words and the centuries have set upon them their triumphant seal.

"Behold how ye prevail nothing." For a moment a sense of their impotence came upon them and filled them with furious rage. They had exhausted their utmost cunning and power in throwing in his path every obstruction, sowing the air around him with prejudice and suspicion and scandal, bringing against him every false

charge, and were at this very hour concocting against him a plot of murder.

Yet all their machinations and malice had proved in vain. Jesus stood amidst their rage and fury as a white tower of purity and calmness and immovable strength. He held on his way as little impeded by their opposition and hatred as is a river by the rocks in its bed or as a sunbeam by the motes in the air. No wonder such quiet yet irresistible might pressed sharply home upon their consciousness and conscience their impotent opposition and caused them to exclaim, "Behold how ye prevail nothing."

The reason for their failure was that their cause was not based on truth and right, but upon a false conception of the Messiah and false ambitions and hopes. Their fault and weakness was their old trouble of passionately desiring a worldly conqueror and refusing to see in the meek and lowly Jesus their promised Saviour. They were blinded by their bigotry so that they could not see their own Christ when he was walking and working mighty signs among them. Their attempts to stop him were based on falsity, and no lie in the long run can prevail.

II. It is remarkable what tremendous and persistent efforts have been made to arrest the career of Jesus that have yet not prevailed.

Herod thought to do this when he thrust a

sword through every cradle in Bethlehem, but he did not succeed or touch a hair of the holy Babe. The Jews concentrated all their opposition and hatred into their assault on Jesus when they nailed him on the cross. But even the crucifixion was impotent to halt Jesus, and he came back, to the consternation of the Jews, mightier than ever.

Paul tried his hand at stopping Jesus by erecting barriers of swords in his path and attempting to stamp out his name in death, but he was himself strangely arrested in his career and began to preach the very faith he had sought to destroy.

Rome poured ten dreadful persecutions on the name of Christ and tried to drench and drown out Christianity in blood; it burned Christians as torches in Nero's garden or tore them to pieces in the arena, but all these flaming robes and fiery crowns of martyrdom prevailed nothing.

Other persecutions have attended the march of Jesus down through the centuries even to our day, notably in Russia, but still they are impotent against the Name that is above every name. Steadily and irresistibly as the sun rises above the horizon, pushing its way through smoke and clouds and storm, so has Jesus risen above the centuries, and his Name endureth to all generations.

III. Skeptical and critical opponents have also thought to arrest the Name and influence of Jesus. Celsus tried hard to do this as early as the second century, and Voltaire near the middle of the eighteenth century predicted, "Ere the beginning of the nineteenth century Christianity will have disappeared from the earth"; and he boasted that while it took twelve men to start Christianity he would show the world that one man could stop it.

In our own day, also, there are opponents of Christianity, some of them being critical scholars, and others social radicals, and still others anarchists, who think they can undermine his gospel and uproot his kingdom out of the world.

But against all these currents and attacks of opposition Jesus Christ holds on the quiet tenor of his way. He does not strive nor cry, his voice is not heard in public clamor on the street, but silently as sunshine and wind wear down mountains, or irresistibly as the glacier pushes its way toward the sea, does Christ move on against opposition so that his very enemies must be forced to confess or think among themselves, "Behold how ye prevail nothing."

IV. While driven to admit their own impotence the Pharisees were also constrained to acknowledge the great success of Jesus in draw-

ing the people to himself. "The world is gone after him," they exclaimed, this being the impression made upon them by the throngs that followed Jesus on his triumphal entry into Jerusalem.

In this also they spoke better than they knew. The world hungered for such a Teacher and Saviour as Jesus was even in that day more than for the worldly conqueror the Pharisees desired. Its desire was yet largely dormant and its tongue was dumb, but deep down in its heart it had a yearning for a Prince of Peace.

The world has had enough empires built with swords on human bones and blood. Alexander, Cæsar, Charlemagne, Napoleon, the Kaiser (mark the anticlimax!)—the world hopes it has seen the last of this line. For humanity has a deep-seated hunger for order and justice in brotherhood, deliverance from the slavery of sin and emancipation into the liberty of the sons of peace.

Jesus has no sword, but he comes to found a kingdom based on truth and trust, divine Fatherhood and human brotherhood, that appeals to all men to come unto him out of all the sin and strife of the world and find peace and rest. His personality has attractive power to draw the world, his cross is the symbol and proof of his sacrifice and service for the redemption of humanity.

V. And the world has gone after him in ever-increasing numbers.

At first his followers were twelve, then they grew into a multitude on the day of his triumphal entry so as to excite the astonishment of his enemies, and on the day of Pentecost they suddenly swelled to three thousand.

Steadily his Name made its way through the Roman world, leaping at one bound from Asia to Europe, causing pagan faiths to wither before it, until it became dominant, and in three hundred years a Christian Cæsar sat on the throne. Down through the centuries the world has gravitated to him by some irresistible attraction.

The wise men from the East were the forerunners of a long and widening train of wise men from all quarters of the world. The three thousand of Pentecost became a hundred millions in fifteen centuries and by the twentieth century these had grown to six hundred millions, or more than a third of the population of the globe. Admittedly large numbers of these are nominal Christians and are counted only because they live in Christian lands, but after all proper reduction has been made it is still a considerable part of the world that has gone after Jesus Christ.

And this following of Christ is greatly enhanced in weight and influence when quality

rather than quantity is considered. For Christendom is incomparably the best part of the world, in spite of its shadows and storms of war; and in general Christ attracts the choicest spirits from among men.

Jesus Christ is winning the world. His cross, towering o'er the wrecks of time, is becoming a central magnet among men. His personality is so pure and persuasive and powerful as to draw increasing multitudes after him. He has something in his hand and heart that appeals to men and satisfies their deepest needs and most earnest yearnings.

The Christian centuries are yet young, and with God a thousand years are as one day. Jesus took a long look and leap into the future when he predicted that if he be lifted up he would draw all men unto him. Christian missions are yet only setting up their outposts around the globe. The world cannot permanently remain blind and dumb to the vision and appeal of Jesus, and there will yet go up a great shout, "The kingdom of the world is become *the kingdom* of our Lord and of his Christ."

CHAPTER XXII

UNCONSCIOUS OBEISANCE

THE enemy may bear witness by what he does not less than by what he says. That actions speak louder than words has such a weight of authority in its favor that it has grown into a proverb. And all the more weighty is such witness when it is unintended and unconscious.

The scene of this action was at the gate of the garden of Gethsemane where Jesus with his disciples had gone to spend the night before the crucifixion in retirement and prayer. While he was deeply hidden in the shadows of the olive trees and the disciples were slumbering, and he was burdened with such a mysterious weight of sorrow as pressed drops of blood out of his brow, a crowd containing the traitorous Judas as guide and Roman soldiers and priests and Pharisees and the rabble of the city appeared at the gate to arrest him.

I. The flaring torches of the soldiers penetrated the garden and Jesus knew what was at hand, and without waiting for the soldiers and his enemies to come to him, he went out to them and asked, "Whom seek ye?" When they

answered, "Jesus of Nazareth," he instantly replied, "I am he."

We are struck with the calm straightforwardness and bravery of this confession. A guilty man would have fled deeper into the shadows and endeavored to hide and escape from the officers; and even an innocent man might have thought it was not incumbent on him to put himself in the way of his enemies.

But Jesus had nothing to conceal or fear, much less he had no thought or instinct of concealing himself; and so in his innocence and sincerity and unaffected fearlessness he went forth out of the garden and announced himself as the Nazarene they had come to arrest. Absolute innocence was the peace and protection of his soul, and he knew that however armed men under the guidance and instigation of bitter enemies might come against him they could do him no real harm. A sword might cut his body in two, but it could no more sever asunder his spirit than it could saber the sunlight to pieces.

Innocence is ever the best protection to the soul, for it is an armor no fiery dart can pierce, and it inspires a man with calm and unaffected but fearless confidence.

Jesus never concealed his true personality and mission and ever spoke the simple truth at any

cost or peril. To the woman of Samaria who spoke of the coming Messiah he calmly said, "I that speak unto thee am he." And always he comes out before the whole world and declares that he is the Son of God and the Saviour of all men.

II. At this word from Jesus the soldiers and priests and Pharisees and also Judas and the rabble "went backward, and fell to the ground." Was there ever a more striking instance of unconscious obeisance, a truer witness to the grandeur and majesty of the personality of the Nazarene? Let the letters stand out in living light in this record that his enemies, Judas the traitor, bitter priests, and proud Pharisees, and even stolid Roman soldiers, at his presence went backward and fell to the ground. What was the secret of this unwitting obeisance?

We may first ascribe it in a degree to the lurking sense of guilt of these priests and Pharisees themselves. However conscientious they were in their opposition to Jesus, and we must allow that in their deep traditionalism and conservatism they did consider that he imperiled the whole orthodoxy and institution of Judaism, yet they must also have had many misgivings of conscience as they came in contact with the Nazarene and heard his words and witnessed his works and felt the sincerity of his spirit and the

purity and loftiness of his character. At times the whips and stings of his sharp words against them must have gone into their souls.

Their worldliness was the real ground of their opposition to his spiritual teaching and kingdom, and this at times must have been disturbed by their better sense of truth and duty. Perhaps there were moments and finer moods in their experience when conscience made itself heard and troubled them with a sense of guilt. Any such realization would be an inner weakness that would endanger their security; a state of unstable equilibrium that might on some sudden slip throw them into a state of fear and panic.

The unexpected appearance of Jesus at the gate of the garden in his calmness and bravery may have precipitated this sense of guilt and helped to fell them to the ground. Their strength gave way and they collapsed.

Judas especially would be subject to such a sudden breaking down of both body and soul under the burden and burning fire of his accusing conscience.

"Conscience," says George Eliot, "is harder than our enemies, knows more, accuses with more nicety." One may be ever so strong and brave, and yet conscience may secretly undermine his strength and smite him down at any unexpected moment. Many a guilty man, sud-

denly confronted with his victim, has given way and fallen down in confession. Any secret sin or unfaithfulness in a man is so much concealed weakness that, like the rotten heart of the oak, will send him crashing down in a storm. Only he is a strong man who can say:

> "My strength is as the strength of ten,
> Because my heart is pure."

On the other hand, the familiar passage in Shakespeare is as true psychology as it is sound ethics:

> "Thus conscience does make cowards of us all;
> And thus the native hue of resolution
> Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought."

III. Added to this sense of insecurity on the part of these enemies of Jesus, caused by their accusing consciences, was the effect upon them of the overpowering majesty of his personality.

We cannot clearly picture this, because we have no portrait or personal description that enables us to visualize him in an image. But as the soul carves the face and creates the body as the proper garment and expression of itself, his personality must have shone out of his appearance in impressive power. The starry radiance of his eyes, the lofty majesty stamped upon his countenance, the transparent sincerity and

purity and peace of his soul, the calmness and poise of his person and manner, all combined into a total personality that put a subtle and irresistible spell upon all those that came into his presence.

Even human persons may have their souls so kindled and raised to power as to cause their faces to glow and produce strange effects. Thus the face of Moses as he came down from communion with God on Sinai shone, and of Daniel Webster it is recorded that for several hours after the delivery of his great oration at the dedication of the Bunker Hill Monument his countenance wore an indescribably grand expression that amazed those that came into his presence.

So was Jesus at this crisis in a degree transfigured. His enemies did not consciously analyze and could not have explained the strange power he had over them, but unconsciously and irresistibly they went backward and fell to the ground. They were instinctively awed into such reverence that they could not but render him this unconscious obeisance.

So likewise Pilate at the trial of Jesus was so impressed with his calmness and self-evident innocence that he "marveled"; and poor Judas was so overcome by the majestic appearance of the Master whom he had betrayed that he paid

him the terrible tribute of his self-inflicted retribution.

In many ways have men rendered Jesus this unconscious obeisance. Many of his bitterest enemies have written tributes to his truth and grace and greatness that have crowned him with rank and dignity and power above that of his human kind. Hardly has any infidel or scoffer let loose against him arrows of denial or depreciation of his goodness or even of his divinity without unwittingly dropping some word of appreciation that has done him unconscious honor.

And have not the centuries both before and after his birth paid him tremendous unconscious obeisance? What means this fact that his birth has been made the base line of our calendar so that all events are dated in their relation to him backward or forward through all the centuries? The most significant and overshadowing fact in the morning newspaper is just the four figures that give the year of its publication. All the centuries are looking down upon that page and stamping it with the imprimatur of Jesus Christ. We do not know when an event happened and what is its meaning and connection in the general course of the world until we bring it into relation to him.

The whole world is thus ever going backward

and falling at the feet of Jesus. Every book and article and letter that has been written against him by the very date it bears renders him this unconscious obeisance.

Not only so; but he has so impressed his personality upon our civilization and interwoven it into all our laws and literature, speech and habits and thoughts that we can no more escape from his presence and influence than we can escape from the grip of gravitation or from the atmosphere we breathe. Whether willingly or unwittingly, the world in wide and profound ways is ever going backward from the personality of Jesus and falling down before him.

Personalities are the master forces of the world. It was by the power of personality that Demosthenes swayed Athens, Cæsar mastered Rome, Paul drove the wedge of the gospel into Europe, Luther created the Reformation, Napoleon dominated the kings of his day and Lincoln liberated a fettered race. Before such men the world is always going backward and falling to the ground, and the kind of men that thus put their spell upon the world and master and mold it determines the kind of world in which men live.

The central Figure and dominating Personality in the world to-day is Jesus Christ. Very far is he yet from having put all things under

him. The world has not yet made him really King, but more and more he is mounting into power, and more and more widely and sincerely is the world bowing before him in conscious or unconscious obeisance and obedience.

This increasing centrality of his Person is the most hopeful fact in the world to-day.

Either willingly or unwillingly must we all at last render obeisance to him. "Kiss the son; lest he be angry; and ye perish in the way."

CHAPTER XXIII

A BETRAYER OF INNOCENT BLOOD

It is a fact as startling as it is sad that we find one of the enemies of Jesus uttering these testimonies within the sacred circle of the twelve.

Back in the ministry in Galilee Jesus had put to his disciples the ominous question, "Did not I choose you the twelve, and one of you is a devil?" And the night of the arrest just preceding the base treachery of Judas, at the institution of the Lord's Supper in the upper chamber Jesus made the sorrowful announcement, "One of you shall betray me, even he that eateth with me."

Thus within this narrow inner circle irradiated by the white light of the personal presence and holy character of Jesus there was one black spot, a betrayer and traitor! At least one tare was growing up within that little garden of wheat that was selected and planted by the Master and was under his personal cultivation and care.

There need be small surprise, then, if such tares are found in the wider field of the church and the kingdom in the world. Never was there a church so pure that it did not contain some unworthy members if not false professors.

From that upper chamber, out of its precious privacy and intimacy, Judas went straight to the Pharisees and led them with the soldiers to the gate of the garden, where Jesus was enduring his mysterious agony and whence he came out before them.

Judas pointed Jesus out and betrayed him with a kiss and saw him seized and led off to his trial. He seems to have been present at the trial before Caiaphas and he saw Jesus condemned and taken away to Pilate.

He knew that this was the sure beginning of the end, and forthwith conscience awoke with terrible power and seized him with an overwhelming sense of guilt and remorse, and exclaiming, "I have sinned in that I betrayed innocent blood," he threw down the thirty pieces of silver he had received as the price of his treachery as though they burned his hands like coals of hell-fire, and went and hanged himself.

Apparently, the very rope refused to bear such a burden and broke under the weight of his guilty body so that "falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out" (Acts 1. 18).

I. This testimony of Judas is of special weight because of his relation to Jesus as one of the twelve.

He had for three years enjoyed the rare priv-

ilege of membership in this chosen inner circle. During this considerable period he was in daily companionship and intimacy with Jesus. He heard him deliver his public discourses and saw his wonderful works. He heard the Sermon on the Mount, listened to all his gracious words on the revelation of the Father, heard the parables, saw the bread multiplied as it was distributed among the five thousand, saw Jesus walking on the sea, and witnessed the healing of many sick and lame and blind and demonized people.

More precious still was the privilege of being present when the Master gathered his disciples around him for private instruction and confidential fellowship. He was admitted into all these intimacies and was also made treasurer of the little company and carried the bag, so that special trust was exercised in him.

It was in these circumstances and under all this light that Judas knew Jesus. He saw him daily in companionship in which he had the most direct and intimate knowledge of him. If there had been any slightest spot or speck on Jesus, it would have come out in this white light. If there had been any insincerity or selfishness or suspicion of wrongdoing during these years, Judas was in a position to know of it.

Here, then, we have the testimony of an enemy who had all the inside privilege of a

friend and knew the facts far more clearly and certainly than they could be known by the open enemies of Jesus. Yet he testified, "I have sinned in that I betrayed innocent blood."

And so Jesus was innocent, this friend turned enemy being the judge and witness. A man who had the fullest and freest opportunity of knowing the truth and was also under the greatest pressure to find fault with Jesus in order to justify himself was yet forced to confess by his own conscience that he was wrong and that Jesus was spotlessly pure. It would be hard to find or imagine testimony that is better grounded and is fortified by such a confession forced out of the witness against his personal interest.

II. This confession of Judas illustrates the power of conscience to extort from the guilty soul a confession against the strongest restraining motives.

How did it come that Judas, having gone so far in his fatal course, did not persist in it to the end? He had no hope of retrieving his error and saving Jesus from his fate by his testimony to his innocence. The fatal deed was now done and there was no undoing it. The Moving Finger had written, and not all his wit could lure it back to cancel half a line, nor all his tears wash out a word of it. Why this sudden and irre-

sistible eruption of conscience? This is part of the mystery of the psychology of sin.

No doubt the base treachery of Judas had been a long and slow growth. It was no instant impulse that precipitated an unpremeditated step, but a deeply considered and settled plan. That "bag" he carried had worked on his avarice and his greedy fingers had clutched it with increasing avidity. It was Judas, among others, that objected to the act of Mary in spilling the precious ointment on Jesus as a mark of respect and devotion, saying that it might have been sold for three hundred pence and given to the poor: "not because he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and having the bag took away what was put therein."

So his avaricious, thieving nature had long been at work, and he now saw a further chance and profitable opening for making money by betraying the Master to his enemies for thirty pieces of silver.

But no sooner was the act done than he began to realize its awful nature and consequences. It had hitherto clothed itself in an attractive garb as a thing easy to do and quick and profitable in its pay; but now it suddenly started up before his awakened and alarmed conscience as a sheeted ghost or fiery demon from the pit, come to seize him and hurry him off to judgment.

The whole horrid nature of the act was stripped naked and it frightened and tormented him with its fearful aspect and accusing voice; and it was too much for him; he gave way before it in a panic of fear and remorse, and in the agony and helplessness of his guilty soul he could not hide nor excuse his crime, but sealed his own doom with the forced confession, "I have sinned in that I betrayed innocent blood."

This is an instance of the power and fury of an awakened conscience as dramatic and tragic as that of Shakespeare's Lady Macbeth; and it adds all its weight and intensity to the truth of the testimony of Judas to the innocence of Jesus.

He now realized anew this innocence. As he glanced back through those eventful three years in which he associated with Jesus in company with the twelve, he saw him shining like a white star amidst his disciples and through all the machinations and malice of the Jews.

Against this dark background the innocence of Jesus stood out in spotless purity and splendor; and however his own interest and safety might have constrained him to deny the truth and cast aspersions upon his former Master, he could not do otherwise than offer this decisive witness in his favor.

III. The final act in the tragedy of Judas is

a further element in the confirmation of his testimony.

The moment his conscience awoke and gripped him his soul abhorred the silver he had received as the price of his treachery. He now loathed the very thing he had loved and that had lured him to his fate, and it plagued him with an intolerable sense of his guilt, stabbing his soul to the heart. He tried to give it back to the priests, but they now turned against him with cold-blooded callousness and scorn as they taunted him, "What is that to us? see thou to it." The very enemies of Jesus that had used his false disciple as a tool to do their work now despised him and contemptuously cast him off.

Then he threw the blood-stained silver down on the floor of the temple and went and cut short his wretched life at the end of a rope.

The priests, who were more guilty than Judas, now affected great piety in the disposal of the silver, saying it would defile their treasury to use it and devoted it to the purchase of a potter's field, known afterward as "The field of blood," where pauper Jews dying in Jerusalem were buried: thus many men who are flagrantly wicked in great things profess punctilious piety in small things.

This action of Judas sets the final seal of his own blood on his testimony to the innocence of

Jesus. In some strange way he felt that his own blood was the only atonement he could offer for the innocent blood he had betrayed. However false his soul, in this last utterance we have from his lips we are sure he told the truth.

Of all the testimonies offered to Jesus by his enemies, that of Judas in some ways is the strongest. He knew the truth in the matter as no other enemy could know it; his conscience awakened to an overwhelming sense of the enormity of his guilt and forced from him a confession in the face of all his self-regarding interests; and he sealed his testimony with his own self-shed blood.

His course and end stand out on the pages of the Gospels as a startling witness of an enemy to Jesus and as a solemn and tragic warning against the sin of associating with Jesus Christ in the light of our Christian knowledge and privileges and then turning against him in unfaithfulness. Such betrayal is disloyalty to the truth and grace of God in Christ and is fraught with the most serious consequences in the degradation and self-condemnation of the soul and in its final doom.

No soul can be disloyal to the innocent Christ and be as good as ever. Such unfaithfulness to the beauty of his holiness will react unfavorably and fatally upon the guilty soul itself.

CHAPTER XXIV

NO FAULT IN THIS MAN

THIS is the clear voice and decisive verdict that rings out above all the confusion and fury of falsehood and hatred that raged around the trial of Jesus.

This trial was a complex affair and passed through many stages. Being the culmination of a propaganda of malice and murder, it had no essential principle of fact and truth binding it into consistency, but was a surging wave of mad emotionalism that was driven hither and thither by any gust of expediency or passion that seemed to promise any means and hope of reaching its wicked end.

Jesus after his arrest was first taken before the former high priest, Annas, then before Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin in an irregular trial at night, which was followed by a more regular trial before the same tribunal in the morning.

He was then arraigned before Pilate, the Roman governor, as the Sanhedrin could not finally pass sentence of death. Pilate, after hearing the case and privately examining the accused, sent him to Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee, then present in the city, on the ground

that Jesus was a Galilæan, thus hoping to rid himself of the troublesome matter.

Herod, after vainly trying to get some miracle from Jesus, returned the case to Pilate, who was at length forced to render a verdict and passed sentence of death.

I. The light of the trial at this point falls intensely on Pilate himself. He was the Roman governor of Judæa with his capital at Cæsarea, but with his residence during the feasts up at Jerusalem, probably in Herod's palace. He was unscrupulous and corrupt, tyrannical and cruel, and exasperated the Jews into fanatical rebellion by repeated acts of sacrilege and violence. The most momentous event of his governorship, though perhaps to him the most trivial, was this trial. He doubtless looked on Jesus as a contemptible Jew, possessed of a harmless delusion; yet had it not been for his accidental association with that Jew we never would have heard of Pilate. He stepped into the presence of Jesus, as a mote floats into a sunbeam, and in that light stands revealed forever.

He showed some disposition to deal fairly with his prisoner and made some feeble attempts to release him; but in the end he played the part of an unjust judge and a coward, and "Suffered under Pontius Pilate" is the indelible stigma that has been affixed to his name.

II. When the Jews brought Jesus in the gray light of the morning to Pilate's judgment hall they would not enter lest they should be defiled: for men may be intensely religious at one point while engaged in the deepest wickedness at another; especially they may be punctilious in the observance of petty outward points of ceremony while disregarding and trampling upon the weightiest inward matters of moral principles.

Pilate therefore came out to them and, having observed the prisoner, inquired, "What accusation bring ye against this man?"

This was certainly an important point, and yet the Jews had not only failed to supply it, but were indefinite and evasive when called upon for it. "If this man were not an evildoer," they said, "we should not have delivered him up unto thee."

But such a plea as a basis of judgment was not in accordance with Roman ideas of law, and the governor attempted to throw the case back into their hands by telling them to take the prisoner and judge him according to their own law.

This was Pilate's first device to shift his own responsibility and get rid of Jesus; and from this point on it is pitiful to see him tossed about in his indecision and cowardice, impaled now on

one and now on another horn of the case, vainly trying to escape and yet mercilessly driven on by the murderous mob to a fatal decision.

Pilate now saw that he must look into the case, and he went back into the palace and called Jesus for a private interview. The Jews by this time had presented charges to the effect that Jesus was perverting the nation, forbidding to pay taxes to Cæsar, and declaring himself a king—charges that were false but that they knew would be effective with Pilate, alarming his fears for his own safe standing at Rome.

Pilate began the interview by inquiring into this point. "Art thou the King of the Jews?" "Sayest thou this of thyself, or did others tell it thee concerning me?" was the searching question with which Jesus replied. If the question of Pilate was a sincere expression of personal interest, Jesus could do much more for the inquirer than if it were a mere repetition of current rumor.

This question also goes to the root of our religious faith and life and stamps it as experimental and vital, or as traditional and superficial.

Pilate answered with the contemptuous reply, "Am I a Jew?" With what bitter contempt and scorn must he have uttered these words. Jesus now sketched the outline of his kingdom, and Pilate, catching at the word "king," repeated

the inquiry, "Art thou a king then?" Calmly Jesus answered, "Thou sayest that I am a king."

Puzzled and awed by the strange prisoner who declared that "Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice," Pilate exclaimed, "What is truth?" an utterance that was evidently the pessimistic sneer of a man of the world who had lost all sense of the reality and value of truth.

Without waiting for a reply to his question Pilate hurried out from the presence of Jesus and presently he announced to the Jews, "Ye brought unto me this man, as one that perverteth the people: and behold, I, having examined him before you, found no fault in this man touching those things whereof ye accuse him." Twice he made this declaration, and it stands written in indelible words in these records to this day.

III. What is the value of this verdict? This depends on the impartiality and justice of the judge and on the evidence he had before him. Did Pilate know the facts in the case? When the matter came before him it seemed to him at first glance to be a Jewish religious squabble of no importance, and he thought to dismiss it by remanding it back to the Jewish fanatics to settle it among themselves.

But when he found this could not be done, he was forced to look into it and he took unusual

pains to learn the facts in the matter. He not only questioned the Jews and demanded that they present their charges and evidence, but he took Jesus with him into his palace where he questioned him closely in a private interview.

This must have been an unprecedented and extraordinary procedure with this Roman governor and gave him an opportunity to observe Jesus narrowly and judge him intimately. This Roman judge was trained in the law and he exercised his legal authority and far more than his usual care to discover the facts and truth about Jesus.

And what was the attitude of Pilate toward the case? Did he have any partisan and personal interest in the decision he would make? Had his relation to the case been that purely of a Roman judge, with his deep inbred sense and habit of Roman law and justice, he would doubtless have endeavored to be unpartisan and just. But he had a strong personal interest in the case that tended powerfully to sway the scales of justice in his hand.

When the Jews cunningly framed their charges so as to accuse the prisoner of forbidding to pay taxes to Cæsar and of declaring himself to be a king, they put a powerful partisan pressure on Pilate and raised a great fear in his heart. Should he decide in favor of Jesus and against

the Jews he would lay himself open to the charge of treason against Rome; and no more dreadful fear could be planted in Pilate's mind. A little later in the trial when Pilate was trying to find a way of releasing Jesus the Jews flung this very charge full in his face: "If thou release this man, thou art not Cæsar's friend: every one that maketh himself a king speaketh against Cæsar."

Pilate now saw he was in a desperate situation. The murderous mob was at his throat, the tiger already had a taste of his cowardly blood, and he had not the courage to take his stand boldly on the ground of justice and declare the prisoner innocent and free. All the partisan interests and personal fears of the Roman judge conspired to force from him a verdict of guilty and hand the prisoner over to the mob.

Yet in the midst of all this fury and fear he was compelled by his Roman instinct of truth and justice to utter in tones that have come thundering down through all these centuries the bold judgment, "I have found no fault in this man!" By the seals of full and proper evidence in the case and of a verdict forced out of a partisan judge who was trying to escape such a conclusion, this decision is stamped with the highest authority and the greatest weight, and it shines out like a star in the gloom and

storm of all the unfairness and falsity of this trial.

IV. "No fault in this man!" So this is the outcome of all this attempt to fasten a grave crime on Jesus of Nazareth, and a Roman judge with full knowledge of the case blows it away with one breath of his mouth! What other verdict could he have justly rendered? No witnesses could be found that would agree on any charge against Jesus. Many other charges were brought against him, and of these some were false, and others, such as that he was a trampler upon tradition and consorted with publicans and sinners, only enhanced the courage of his mind and the sympathy of his heart and the splendor of his character.

And how many other witnesses of his works could have added their testimony to the verdict "No fault," and have swelled it to a mighty chorus? The man healed of a withered hand, the palsied man who was enabled to take up his bed and walk, the many people who had been healed of diseases and evil spirits, the disciples who had lived with him in intimacy, the multitudes who had heard the Sermon on the Mount and received bread on the grassy shore of the lake,—would not all these and many others have joined with tears and shouts of joy in this testimony?

And has not the same testimony come rolling

down through the ages, gathering volume with every century? Is not Christ's own question, "Which of you convicteth me of sin?" yet an unanswered challenge?

It is true that some critics have tried to pick faults in the character or teaching or program of Jesus, but these critics have never proved their case nor won any considerable assent to their allegations; rather such attempted detractions, like these ancient charges, have confirmed faith in him and redounded to his honor and glory.

The friends of Jesus ask for no favors at this point, and he himself must submit to the keenest and most hostile criticism; but after nineteen hundred years of searching publicity the world in the light of to-day affirms and confirms the verdict, "We find no fault in this Man."

CHAPTER XXV

HE STIRRETH UP THE PEOPLE

"He stirreth up the people," was the charge brought by the Jews against Jesus before Pilate. As the charge meant that Jesus was inciting the people to riot and rebellion against the Roman power, it was an effective bit of political demagoguery. Rebellion against Rome was just what the Jews wanted, but they knew this charge would catch the ear of Pilate, and any false accusation was a good enough stick with which to beat the Galilæan.

The charge was false, but, like so many of the things said against Jesus by his enemies, it was true in a deeper sense than they meant or knew. Jesus did stir up the people mightily. He walked up and down Judæa, the crossroads of the world, shattering old traditions and letting loose ideas that were destined to shake the whole world. Great crowds followed him, immense excitement often attended his work; but these were only local symptoms of a commotion that soon swept across the borders of that little country and widened out around the globe

I. Jesus Christ was incomparably the greatest world-shaker that ever trod the earth.

Alexander the Great penetrating the East and battering down old political and social fabrics, Cæsar sweeping his sword around the Mediterranean shore, Napoleon trampling Europe to pieces under his tread—these all were outdone by this humble Carpenter. Rome crushed him on its cross, but he soon put one of his followers on its throne and stopped its gladiatorial shows. The most impressive ruin of ancient Rome is the Coliseum, the mighty and mournful symbol of pagan pleasure-seeking madness and cruelty. It was the hand of Jesus that quenched the flow of blood in that arena and emptied those vast tiers of seats of their shouting multitudes.

Later down the centuries, it was Jesus Christ who stirred up Europe in the great movements of the Middle Ages. The crusades set all Europe in commotion, and the Reformation was a tremendous stirring of the people, breathing into them a new spirit and inciting them to throw off the bonds of papal despotism and superstition and have freedom of faith and life.

The Reformation, however, was only a part of a still wider movement against autocracy; it led on to the rise of democracy against unlimited monarchy. Cromwell's commonwealth in the seventeenth century was the logical consequence of Luther's reformation in the sixteenth. The same spirit that rose against the Pope was sure

to rise against the King Freedom in the church was bound to lead to freedom in the state. Hence arose our modern constitutional kingdoms and republics, and these came because Jesus Christ had stirred up the people.

In still later times the people again were stirred up; next, against slavery. The logic of human freedom as worked out in the Reformation and democracy was incomplete as long as some men owned other men. The fact that the masters had white and the slaves had black skins did not matter, for underneath their white and black skins they both had red blood. The institution of slavery was very old and deeply intrenched in human interest, prejudice and passion, and it fought savagely for its life; but Jesus stirred the people up powerfully against it, and it had to go.

Next came the turn of the American liquor traffic, another evil that was inveterately rooted in human appetite and greed. No voice was lifted against it until the voice of Jesus began to get a hearing and through one hundred years he kept stirring up Christian and public opinion against it, until its doom was sealed and embodied in the Constitution, where "it is written" —and will so stand until thirty-six States can be found that will write it out.

A long line of related social laws is now crowd-

ing into our statutes, and they are being written there by Christian public opinion, which is only another way of saying that they are being written by the hand of Christ. Equal suffrage, the protection of the child, sanitary laws in factories and tenements, restriction of monopolies, and many forms of social betterment plainly are the outcome of the same logic that created the Reformation and set free democracy in our modern world.

II. And what was the Great War but the mighty outbreak and uprush of the same spirit? It was at bottom a war of ideas and ideals, of the modern Christian against the ancient pagan world, of democracy against despotism, of free spirit against brute force, of Christ against the Kaiser. The spirit of Jesus had so far permeated the whole world far outside the warring powers that German ideas and ideals had become an anachronism which the twentieth century would not tolerate. The whole sea of humanity was stirred up to its depths over this recrudescence of militarism, and it poured a flood of wrath in upon it to drown it out in blood.

The stormy sea has not yet subsided, and it may take a long time for its angry waves to sink into rest and again lie smooth and smiling under the sun, but a majestic Voice stirred up that storm of resistance against tyranny, and the

same Voice will yet speak the word, "Peace, be still."

So it is literally true that from the days of his earthly ministry to the present hour Jesus has stirred up the people with a power and passion never equaled by any other. He is the greatest world-shaker this old world has ever known.

III. What means does Jesus use in this world? The people may be stirred up by various means to various ends. The Jews sought to stir up Pilate and the people against Jesus by appealing to their prejudice and hatred, and this is a very popular and potent method of stirring them up to this day. Alexander and Cæsar and Napoleon stirred the people up with their swords; but Jesus had no sword and forbade one to his disciples. He had but one means, and the Jews themselves hit upon it in their charge: "He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place."

"Teaching"—that was the means, and the only means, by which Jesus stirred up the people and caused all this commotion in the world. He simply let loose ideas among men, and these have come rolling down through the centuries, upsetting thrones and rearranging the map of the world, uprooting old institutions and reshaping all civilization.

Nothing is so charged with subtle and irresis-

tible might as an idea. It may be as invisible and seem as light and impotent as air, but it has in it power more explosive and titanic than dynamite. It can diffuse itself everywhere like the atmosphere and insinuate itself into all crevices and cracks and silently dissolve into dust the hardest rock of opposition. Men may laugh at it as they did at the idea of Columbus or at the ideal of freedom for the black man, but it will override them as ruthlessly as an avalanche.

A potent idea in time pervades all men's thinking and feeling and molds and tempers them into its way and will. It fascinates the imagination and captivates the heart. Let a great idea get loose among the people, and it will stir them up as nothing else can. The schoolteacher is the most powerful man in the world, and Jesus Christ was and is the greatest Schoolteacher this world ever has seen.

IV. What was the teaching of Jesus that so stirred up the people? It was the whole gospel of his redemption, but it can be summed up in two words—divine Fatherhood, human brotherhood. The one bound men in kinship to God, and the other bound them in kinship to one another. The one brings salvation from sin through atonement and penitence and pardon and makes all men dependent on and obedient

to God; the other makes all men dependent on one another, regardful of one another's rights, willing to extend to one another a helping hand and able to live together in mutual peace and love and joy. The one sets the cross on Calvary as the expression of the Father's love, and the other bids all men look unto it in common dependence and be saved.

These two ideas are big enough and potent enough to stir up the people of the whole world. They have in them dynamic to shake down old evils and make all things new. It was these ideas that emptied the Coliseum, caused the Reformation, created modern democracy, struck the shackles off the slave, uprooted the liquor traffic. It is these ideas that are rewriting so much of our modern legislation and that won the Great War itself.

During all these centuries Jesus has been standing in the midst of the nations, teaching them that God is the Father of their spirits and that all they are brethren, and has thus stirred up a series of commotions that have shaken the world, from center to circumference.

V. And this work still is going on. The unrest that yet fills the world is stirred up by unfulfilled ideas and ideals. In fact, fermentation is bound to stir the world up more profoundly than ever. Modern political ideas that are struggling to

find expression in every continent and country and that head up in the League of Nations cannot be put down but will press toward their goal with cumulative power. The Occident is all in commotion, and the vast Orient is in the travail of the birth of republics and modern institutions.

We need look for no world rest in this generation; and the future need not expect it. Rest for this disjointed world, so full of unsolved and explosive problems and perils, is the last thing we should expect or desire. For rest is stagnation, and stagnation is death. Life is active and aggressive, full of vigor and vim and victory. The fact that the world is one vast seething fermentation is itself a hopeful fact, for this is evidence that a spirit is working in it that is verily the Spirit of God, making all things new.

The church needs stirring up along with the world. It settles down into peace and quiet and crystallizes into formalism and traditionalism at its peril. In his own day Jesus gave most of his attention to stirring up the church, for it had passed from life unto death and was already robed in its grave clothes.

It is a healthy sign when the church is in a state of earnest discussion and activity, provided, of course, that it is not pervaded by factional and bitter controversy. Difference of

view may broaden wisdom, and emulation may increase zeal. Denominational rivalries are not all wrong or wasted energy, but may have in them the seeds of wholesome competitive progress.

The great need of this hour, as of every hour, is the pouring out of the Spirit in pentecostal plenitude and power upon the church. When this gift has been received the church will be deeply and vitally stirred up and will move forward in new service and be mighty in word and deed.

CHAPTER XXVI

WHAT SHALL I DO WITH JESUS?

PILATE had to do something with Jesus: there was no escaping a decision and disposal of his case; and this same necessity is forced upon us.

I. Pilate resorted to every device his Roman knowledge of the law and wit could contrive to escape this responsibility. He soon saw that the Jews had brought Jesus before him with a sinister motive to work out their own plot and vengeance and that Jesus was really innocent of any legal charge.

He first tried to put the Jews off with his declaration that he found no fault in the man. But this deliverance only stirred the Jews up to greater fury and urged them to prefer other and more serious charges to the effect that Jesus was instigating sedition among the people throughout Judæa and Galilee.

Pilate caught at the word "Galilee" and remanded the case to Herod Antipas, tetrarch of Galilee, then in the city. He may have flattered himself that he was luckily rid of the troublesome tangle, but it soon came back into his hands more complicated and formidable than ever.

The Roman governor now tried to take advantage of the custom of releasing a prisoner at the feast and suggested that he release unto the Jews either Barabbas, a notorious robber, or Jesus, evidently thinking that they would certainly choose for this favor so innocent and harmless a man as Jesus rather than so dangerous a criminal as Barabbas. But again he was disappointed and met with a hoarse cry from the mob for Barabbas.

At this point Pilate was at the height of his perplexity and helplessly inquired, "What then shall I do unto Jesus which is called Christ?" It was then that a still more dreadful and alarming cry came up into his ears from the mob as they roared, "Let him be crucified." "Why, what evil hath he done?" demanded the Roman judge, who had now lost his courage and self-control and sense of justice and was at the mercy of the mob.

It was then that Pilate resorted to the vain device of washing his hands in water and declaring, "I am innocent of the blood of this righteous man: see ye to it."

Once more he made an effort to release Jesus by declaring that he could find no crime in him, but now the Jews raised the most fearful cry he had yet heard, "If thou release this man, thou art not Cæsar's friend." This was too much

for Pilate, who was frightened at the thought of losing his own place under charge of treason with its sure fate, and he now took the final and fatal step of unjustly and falsely deciding against Jesus and sending an innocent man to his doom.

Thus Pilate was tossed from one to another horn of the case and was relentlessly driven to find an answer to his pathetic question, "What shall I do unto Jesus?"

I. As Pilate was forced that day to make some decision and disposal of the case of Jesus, so has the same necessity been forced upon the ages ever since and it inescapably confronts us to-day.

There are many historical characters and questions with respect to which we do not need to take a position. The facts may not be before us so as to justify such a decision, or even if they were they do not personally involve our conscience and require a decision from us.

One may take a neutral attitude towards the teaching and character and death of Socrates, or on the authorship of the "Letters of Junius," or on multitudes of such questions. One may say: "I have not gone into such matters and I take no partisan or positive stand on them. Put me down as noncommittal and neutral.'

But there are other questions that assume a

personal relation to us, and while we judge them they also judge us. They serve as a test of our ethical standards and nature and determine our character as an acid may test gold.

The question as to whether we should tell the truth or maintain personal honor and purity cannot be set aside as not involving us or as permitting a neutral attitude. Such a question forces us to a personal decision, and we can no more escape it than we can escape the grip of gravitation. Any attitude we take or anything we say with respect to it will be a decision one way or the other.

John Stuart Mill once wrote a pamphlet in which he said in effect that workingmen are liars. Afterward, when running for Parliament and while addressing an audience of workingmen, the pamphlet was handed up to him and he was asked if he wrote it. "I did," he instantly answered, and so honest and brave was his reply that the crowd cheered him.

A cowardly politician would have endeavored to evade the question by some excuse or device to the effect that he was not sure that he had written it, or that if he had he did not mean it. But Mr. Mill would tolerate in himself no equivocation on the point, did not in his perplexity, like Pilate, try to extricate himself from

the dangerous situation, but boldly avowed the truth, and his splendid courage won the applause of his audience and also their votes and his election.

We are often confronted in life with these personal questions and situations in which we may feel ourselves tossed about upon the horns of perplexity or caught in a trap from which we cannot escape and must take action that will put us on record and stamp us as loyal and fearless in our support of truth, or as unfaithful and cowardly.

III. Jesus Christ falls into the category of persistent and present questions that demand a personal attitude and answer. He is not simply a historical character and problem, but a present reality and personal test. As the incarnation of his Father and the representative of God in the world he has come walking down through the ages, facing every generation and asking, "Who do men say that I am?"

This question divided Judæa and Galilee in the days of his flesh. Some gave one answer and some another, and thus it cleft asunder his own people by a great gulf that separates them to this day.

The same question has come down through the centuries, marking off the church from the world and splitting the church itself into advo-

cates of various views of his person and into many denominations.

History has revolved around the person of Christ more than that of any other human being, and great controversies and vast libraries of literature have grown out of it.

We are born into the atmosphere of this question, and it is interwoven into the whole web and texture of our civilization so that there is no escaping it. Practically every one living in a Christian land is confronted with it with such point and persistency that he must and does take his attitude and stand for or against Christ.

There are certain historical facts and aspects of the question that involve a degree of historical knowledge, and these questions must be decided in the light of historical truth. But there is also a direct moral relation that every one sustains to Christ that tests his ethical affinities and decisions and puts upon him the responsibility of action.

The general question, "Who do men say that I am?" assumes the sharply personal form, "But who say ye that I am?"

And so Pilate's question, "What shall I do with Jesus?" comes home to us and requires us to make some disposal of him in his personal relation to us. We are under the necessity of judging him according to our affinities with his

teachings and character and ideals and demands and we will thereby fundamentally stand with him or against him. At this point we are forced to cast our vote with reference to Jesus Christ.

> "Like you this Christianity or not?
> It may be false, but will you wish it true?
> Has it your vote to be so if it can?"

IV. Pilate's disposition of Jesus deeply affected his life and destiny. By turning against him and delivering him to his enemies he proved recreant to his position and responsibility as judge and to his own conscience, and he turned coward and thereby condemned and degraded himself. He saved his position as Roman governor, but he lost his own soul. And the deep damnation of his action has forever branded him with the indelible stigma, "Suffered under Pontius Pilate."

Our personal disposition of Jesus will inevitably have its effect upon our moral and spiritual life. If we dispose of him after the manner of Pilate, this attitude and act will react upon us as it stamps us as being disloyal to his personal character and holy ideals and saving power and sets us in antagonism to his spirit and demands.

Our judgment of Jesus is automatically reactive: as we judge him, so are we judging ourselves, and we also incur his judgment of us. In

rejecting him we are rejecting eternal and holy truth, and such action must go deeply into character and life. "If any man hear my sayings," said Jesus, "and keep them not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my sayings, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I spake, the same shall judge him in the last day."

This simply asserts the necessary psychological effect upon the soul of either the reception or the rejection of truth. All truth puts this test to the soul, but spiritual truth is especially penetrating and decisive in its self-judgment or automatic action.

Jesus Christ is the incarnation of the truth of the holy and loving God as to sin and salvation and this truth works its own reward or retribution. We are forced to take some attitude and action with reference to him. "Whom say ye that I am?" is his question that pierces through the centuries and penetrates the consciousness and conscience of each one of us; and "What shall I do with Jesus?" is a pointed inquiry that every one of us must and does answer.

CHAPTER XXVII

HIS BLOOD BE ON US

ANOTHER utterance that unconsciously expressed immensely more than was consciously intended. Pilate had performed his vain ritual of washing his hands before the clamorous Jews at the trial of Jesus and had declared, "I am innocent of the blood of this righteous man: see ye to it." But that very blood was on him then; and not all the multitudinous seas through all succeeding ages have been able to wash out its stain.

"See ye to it," said Pilate as he tried to roll his responsibility off upon the Jews. "And all the people answered and said, His blood be on us, and on our children."

Little did they realize that history was listening to and recording this utterance to send it down through all the centuries and that they were unconsciously declaring their own tragic doom in these fateful words.

I. The self-blinding power of prejudice and hatred is seen in this saying. The Pharisees and priests knew the falsity of the charges they had brought against Jesus and the perjured testimony they had purchased against him. The real

cause of their attack upon him was not anything they had alleged, but it was their opposition to him as one who rejected their religious doctrines and spirit and who stood in the way of their worldly and selfish spirit and plan in regard to the earthly kingdom in which they were ambitious to be chief in place and power.

Any false accusation that would put Jesus in a bad light before Pilate was suited to their purpose, and their allegation that he was a wily agitator stirring up rebellion and endangering Pilate's own position was a good enough stick with which to beat their victim, or device to catch him in a fatal trap.

Urged on under the blinding fury of their evil purpose and passion, they were ready to take any step that promised to carry them nearer to their end; and when Pilate tried to wash all guilty complicity off his hands and pass the whole burden of responsibility over to them, so eager were they to get his consent to their demands that they took this responsibility wholly upon themselves in the fateful words, "His blood be on us, and on our children."

They were willing to agree to any terms and incur any consequences to compass their end, and invited this awful doom upon themselves, and were even willing to roll it down upon their children. Nothing should stand between them

and their objective; no reason or right or dreadful fate should stay them one step in their guilty course.

No doubt they believed themselves conscientious and right in their action; but this very conscientiousness was the outgrowth of their own self-willed determination to put out of the way the Man that stood in their path. Such a perverted and blinded conscience is itself a deeper degree of guilt and will work out a more tragic retribution.

History is full of instances in which men have defiantly or lightly, or even mockingly, declared their willingness to bear the consequences of their evil plots and plans, and the court of time has infallibly kept the record and ruthlessly exacted the penalty.

It is one of our most fatal powers that we can so tamper with our conscience that we can get it to consent to and sanction anything we want to do and even dare to invite its worst consequences upon ourselves and upon our children. "If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is the darkness!"

II. How has this self-invited doom been fulfilled? First, in what the Jews missed by rejecting and crucifying their own Messiah. Who can tell what would have happened if his own people had received him? What, then, would have been

the turn of affairs in connection with the life of Jesus, and what would have been the course of events down through the Christian centuries and what would be the position and fortune of the Jews to-day?

No one can unfold the possibilities that would have followed their action had they received and embraced their own Messiah. But the consequences would have been stupendous and might have revolutionized all subsequent history.

The Jews had been trained to receive the Messiah, and had they fulfilled their mission by accepting him and serving him, his kingdom would have been established through some other way than that of the cross. The Jews as a people would then have been the heralds of the gospel and the light-bearers of the world to spread rapidly along every shore and across every continent and sea the good news of redemption and the light of God's universal love.

This light shining out over the world in increasing effulgence would have fallen first upon them to illumine and transfigure them among the nations. Their race would have had the immortal honor of possessing and giving to the world the Messiah and Saviour and they would have shared in his glory as motes shine splendid

in the sunbeam. They would have been a chosen and peculiar and exalted people in the world to this day, and all nations would pay them honor.

All this, and we know not what more, they forfeited when they rejected Jesus and boldly cried out, "His blood be on us, and on our children." It is on them, and one part of the price they are paying and doom they are bearing is the glory that might have been theirs but was forever lost.

III. The negative form of this fate has been attended with a sorer positive judgment that has come upon the Jews. They said, "His blood be on us, and on our children," and the world has taken them at their own word and visited upon them centuries of condemnation. The Jews have been the tragedy of history. Captivity and sorrow had attended them from the beginning of their checkered career, but their sorrows came to a crisis soon after their crucifixion of their Messiah.

Rebellion lifted its obstinate head against Rome until the wrath of the Emperor Titus was aroused and he took decisive measures against these pestiferous people. Roman legions surrounded their capital and swept in slaughter through its streets and leveled its walls and plowed up its very foundation stones.

Thus was literally fulfilled the prophecy uttered against the city by the Nazarene its haughty priests and Pharisees despised and crucified and who prayed that his blood might be upon themselves. Already the fate they invited was coming to pass.

The destruction of their capital was followed by the dispersion of the Jews, and they went out from their homeland never to know another, and ever since they have been wanderers over the earth and pilgrims and strangers in every land. They have found their way over all continents and seas and islands, and while they have been sojourners everywhere they have really found a home nowhere. Though they learn to speak the language and observe the customs of other races and do business with them, yet are they always racially distinct and peculiar, and a deep and almost impassable gulf separates them from the people with whom they dwell. They have acquired physiological and psychological racial characteristics that everywhere mark them as though they had been branded with a hot iron.

Fate has been notoriously unkind and cruel to them. From the time of their rejection of their Messiah they have been objects of unpopularity and obloquy, prejudice and hatred, persecutions and pogroms, torture and death.

Their history has been marked by injustice and cruelty and stained with blood beyond that of any other people and is about the saddest and most tragic page in all the records of the world.

For nineteen hundred years these manifold sufferings have been poured upon them. They have been driven out of some countries and in others they have been shut up in the ghettos of cities or in circumscribed pales. Law and custom have been outrageously unjust to them, and often they have had no rights that Christians felt bound to respect.

Their wails and the cries of their children have filled Europe and Asia from the Rhine to the Indus and their blood has been shed without mercy. Not only through the Middle Ages were they subjected to ruthless persecutions, but in our day pogroms have broken out in Russia and Poland and even in Germany, in which hundreds and thousands have been massacred.

Their sufferings through all these centuries have been the pathos of the world, and even in our own country, where they are not subject to persecution and enjoy full liberty, they are yet viewed with a degree of prejudice and unpopularity.

As Christians and as members of the common brotherhood of our race we can have no sym-

pathy with this persecution of the Jews. They are people of our own humanity and blood and are entitled to the same rights as other men. To visit these injustices and outrages upon them as retribution for their national sin in crucifying Jesus is a monstrous perversion of justice and right. We should resist with all our might such unfounded and inhuman prejudice and propaganda.

Nevertheless, it is a plain matter of fact that the unhappy fate of this people in no small degree has been due to their ancient sin. Had they not committed that crime, it is possible that such persecutions would not have been inflicted upon them by Christian peoples. Undoubtedly, multitudes of people have held them guilty of the wickedness of crucifying the Saviour of the world and have deliberately joined in persecuting them in punishment for the act; and their own self-invited judgment has not been forgotten but has been fulfilled, "His blood be on us, and on our children." And there is no denying that there is some ground for this judgment, for there is such a thing as racial solidarity and responsibility in relation to evil which these Jews themselves acknowledged.

It is still possible for us to bring the blood of Jesus on ourselves. In so far as we reject and are disloyal to his spirit and truth and do despite

to his grace we do in our day, according to our light and opportunity, just what the Jews did in their day and we crucify afresh the Son of God. We bring on ourselves a grave burden of guilt when we set ourselves against his truth and love and saving grace; and we may transmit an evil inheritance to our children.

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE KING OF THE JEWS

On the top of the cross over the head of Jesus was a board whitened with gypsum, bearing in black letters the inscription, "The King of the Jews." Pilate wrote this legend, probably as an exasperating insult to the Jews, a last deadly stab at them and a cunningly malicious way of getting even with them for their obstinate refusal to accede to his plan to release Jesus; and when they saw it they were enraged and interceded with him to change it. But the Roman governor, having recovered some of his courage, met them with the cold refusal, "What I have written, I have written."

Pilate wrote better than he knew and gave another unconscious testimony to Jesus. He may have had some dim discernment of the moral greatness, if not of the supernatural nature, of the strange Nazarene and thus wrote. More likely, however, it was written in jest and as an insult; yet like many another word spoken in ridicule, it has turned out to be one of the greatest truths of the world; and while the inscription itself does not extend the kingship of Jesus beyond the Jews, yet by analogy it may

be broadened out over the world. And so over that furious mob that surged around the cross on which Jesus hung in dying agony was lifted this inscription that proclaimed him a king.

I. Christ was and is a king indeed, but not the kind of a king the Jews wanted. A king had been their age-long hope and burning ambition, but the king they wanted was an earthly ruler and conqueror who would come in the greatness of his strength, crushing other nations under his mighty march and exalting the Jews in power with Jerusalem as the splendid capital and mistress of the world. They did not object to a Cæsar: all they objected to was a Roman Cæsar, and what they wanted was a Jewish Cæsar with themselves enthroned beside him. The keen irony of Pilate's inscription lay in the fact that he saw what kind of a king they wanted and put them in a pitiable position by publishing and exploiting as their king the very Nazarene they hated and were crucifying.

But the world has had kings enough of this kind. They have ruled the world long enough and have made sorry work of it. They have built kingdoms and empires of human bones and blood and drenched the world with tears. Humanity has long since begun to cry for relief from and to throw off the shackles and burdens of such despotism.

The world is now rapidly outgrowing such antiquated and oppressive instruments of class government and tyranny and is marching forward into the freer air and wider liberty of democracy. Thrones and crowns have of late come crashing down, and parliaments and peoples have been rising into power. The king is passing and the common man is coming and has arrived.

The kingship of Jesus is not inconsistent with this democracy, for he does not rule by blood and iron but by reason and right and goodness; and he raises all his followers to the rank of kings by crowning them with self-control and righteous character and inner liberty.

Christ's kingdom is not of this world; it does not come with thrones and crowns, pomp and pageantry, but with truth and love; it is not material but spiritual; not outer but inner; it is not imposed upon men from without by force, but it grows up within men in willing hearts. It is the rule of right, the liberty of love, and the peace of brotherhood. The worst master we can have over us is an evil disposition within us, and Christ is King over us when we have the kingdom of God within our souls.

II. The inscription was written in Hebrew and Latin and Greek, and this fact was deeply significant. All the people present could read

one or another of these languages, and the universality of Christ's kingship was thus symbolized.

The Hebrew or Aramaic was the language of the common people. Kings have hitherto raised themselves above their human kind, and common folk might look upon them with awe as they rolled by robed in scarlet and gold in some spectacular procession of state, but they could not hope to be invited into their presence and fellowship. Christ as king gives all human beings access to his person and entrance into the privilege of his companionship and service. In his kingdom there are no privileged or special classes, but all are kings and priests unto God.

Jesus appeals to the common mind and the humblest people by recognizing their worth and essential equality in the great brotherhood of men and family of God. He is not king over them to whip them into slavery and exploit them in his service, but he lifts them up and crowns them with the honor and splendor of pure character and noble living.

The gospel of his kingdom has been a pervasive and powerful factor and spirit in undermining despotic thrones and raising the level of the common people by breathing into them the spirit of liberty. Wherever Jesus is king the

masses catch the vision of higher ideals and begin to appreciate their worth and rights and live a freer and fuller and richer life. Because he understands them and honors them and speaks to them in their own speech the common people hear him gladly.

The gospel of Christ is being translated into the languages of many of the peoples of the world so that they can read it in their own tongues and understand and interpret it for themselves. It is no longer locked up in learned or dead languages, but it speaks so that every one can hear it in his own speech. And the good news of the kingdom should be so published and preached and lived that every one can understand and feel its appeal and be moved to accept and serve Jesus as king.

III. The inscription as written in Latin may stand as symbolizing Christ's kingship over men of leadership and power. The Romans were then the rulers of the world, and by their political genius and administrative ability, backed up by their legions, they had gathered the whole Western world under their eagles. From Cæsar's golden throne in the Eternal City roads radiated out in every direction to the rim of the empire that ran like an iron band around the Mediterranean world, hemming it in and holding together, and within this vast area and over these

multitudes of people of many races and tongues Cæsar ruled supreme, and at the wave of his hand legions marched and millions of human beings obeyed.

This system of law and order, mastery and might, incarnated in the Roman Empire and in the Latin language, was transmitted to succeeding ages as Rome's contribution to civilization, and much of it endures in and underlies and is built into our civilization to-day.

Christ speaks to such men of leadership and power and appeals to them to enter his kingdom. He is not a weak sentimental man, as he has often been portrayed by the painters, who have depicted him with drooping figure, pale anemic face, long hair parted in the middle and falling down over his shoulders, dreamy eyes, altogether an effeminate creature with a sweet and clinging disposition. And some literary artists have produced similar portraits of him, such as Renan's "sweet Galilæan vision," and Tolstoy's purely passive Christ.

But Jesus was and is no such weak man: he is a strong man with masterful personality before whose majestic mien Roman soldiers went backward and fell upon the ground. Not only did his lips drop dew and honey, but also out of his mouth issued lightnings to smite and scorch hypocritical priests and Pharisees. He was every

inch a king in majesty and might, the Lion of the tribe of Judah as well as the Lamb of God.

Such a Saviour appeals to men of vigor and vim, leadership and heroism, adventure and valor, and such men have ever flocked to his banner. In the days of his flesh he attracted Roman soldiers and officers, and soon his gospel found its way into the palace of Cæsar and then presently a Christian Cæsar sat on the throne of Rome. Down through the centuries he has attracted many kings and knights and nobles, soldiers and generals, legislators and statesmen, pioneers and discoverers, captains of industry, and leaders and heroes in every field of activity and achievement. Prince of Peace though he is, he is also the Captain of our salvation and is found on the battlefield of every war for liberty and right. He is superlatively the strong Man of the world.

The kingship of Jesus is also being extended through and under and over the kingdoms of this world. While his kingdom is not of this world, yet it penetrates and assimilates them and more and more will it infuse his spirit into them until there will go up a great shout, saying, "The kingdom of the world is become the *kingdom* of our Lord and of his Christ: and he shall reign for ever and ever." The Latin inscription on the cross foreshadowed this great day.

IV. The Greek inscription on the cross may be taken as symbolizing the kingship of Jesus over intellect and culture. The Greeks were the thinkers and artists of the ancient world. They developed a genius for thought and beauty, as the Hebrews did for religion and the Romans for power. In the palmy days of Athens there was an outflowering of intellectual and artistic ability in that city such as the world has never since seen equaled in splendor.

The Greek intellect searched widely and profoundly into the nature of the world and life and destiny and produced literary masterpieces that are the models and admiration and inspiration of our universities to this day; and the Greek sense of beauty wrought itself out into architecture and statuary the very ruins and broken fragments of which are now guarded as precious treasures.

The Greeks also perfected a language which in wealth of vocabulary and flexibility of form made it the most facile and forcible and beautiful instrument of human expression in its day and which yet remains as one of our richest and most efficient means of culture.

It was especially fitting that the inscription on the cross should be written in Greek, for in that tongue the New Testament was written and the kingship of Jesus was first preached throughout

the ancient world; and we still read the original New Testament in this tongue to-day.

As Christ appeals to men of power, so does he appeal to people of culture. He called himself the Truth and he bore the name and fulfilled the office of Teacher and he put primary emphasis on knowledge as a means of eternal life. And so he is the Light of the world and has no affinity with the darkness of ignorance and obscurantism. Christian faith insists on searching all fields of truth and feeds on this sustenance from whatever source it is drawn.

The Wise Men came to worship the infant Jesus, and the wise men of the world have ever since been coming to the same Saviour. The greatest of scholars, scientists, philosophers, poets, painters, musicians have laid their precious products at his feet. Culture is not the salvation of the world, and people of the highest intellect and finest taste will find satisfaction and fullness and fruition of spiritual life only as they acknowledge the Greek inscription on the cross of Jesus and bow before him.

Hebrew and Latin and Greek, there is room and welcome around the person and in the kingdom of Jesus for all races and tongues, classes and conditions of men. The illiterate may come and find the simple saving gospel, and the strong and the cultured may come and find their

special needs met and satisfied. Pilate knew not this, and yet unconsciously he prophesied it that day he wrote over the cross of Jesus the inscription, "The King of the Jews," in Hebrew and Latin and Greek.

CHAPTER XXIX

A SAVIOUR WHO COULD NOT SAVE HIMSELF

One of the very brightest crowns his enemies unconsciously placed on the brow of Jesus was their jeer as he hung upon the cross: "He saved others; himself he cannot save." Both of these statements were true, but in a different sense from that which these priests and Pharisees intended, and to this day they blaze out as the very splendor of the cross.

I. "He saved others": so declared these bitter enemies, speaking better than they knew. This truth is written broadly and brightly all over the ministry of Jesus. His wonderful biography is compressed into one marvelous shining line: "who went about doing good." He was doing good and saving others in his thirty silent years as when he was about his Father's business in the Temple and during all the years he worked as a carpenter building houses or making ox-yokes and thereby helping to shelter and feed the world and save it from exposure and hunger.

When he entered upon his public ministry, what could better describe his work than that he was saving others? Was not this the very object of his mission? Did not God so love the

world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life? Was it not a faithful saying that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners?

Many were they who could have testified to the truth of this saying uttered as a bitter sneer by the priests and Pharisees. There was Nicodemus, who came to Jesus by night and held that wonderful interview with him in which this master of Israel had his eyes opened to the spiritual birth and life in a way that was salvation to him: he could have said to these enemies: "What you are saying so derisively about that Man up on the cross is true; he did save others, for he saved me."

And the woman of Samaria, who met Jesus at Jacob's Well and heard that whole marvelous discourse about the spirituality of worship and had her own life exposed and heard from the mysterious Stranger, when she spoke to him of the coming Messiah, the astonishing disclosure, "I that speak unto thee am he," and who then hurried into the city calling out, "Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?"—she could have added her witness to these scoffing words, "It is true he saved others, for he saved me."

And so the long roll could be called of those

whom Jesus had saved and who could have testified to the fact these enemies of Jesus scoffingly but truthfully proclaimed. That blind man whose eyes he had opened; that paralytic who was carried to him on his bed and then carried that same bed back home; those ten lepers whom he had cleansed; that demoniac out of whom he had cast a legion of devils; that outcast woman whom he had forgiven, at the same time causing her accusers to slink away guiltily ashamed from his presence; that Roman centurion whose little daughter he had restored; that woman bowed down with an infirmity of eighteen years who straightened up at his word; the five thousand whom he had fed on the grassy shores of the lake; the great multitude of unnamed people whom he had healed and forgiven —what a mighty chorus of testimony could they have offered to the truth of the saying, "He saved others."

There were still others who could have given more intimate evidence. The eleven disciples whom he had associated with him in his ministry in daily fellowship; Matthew the publican; Peter the profane fisherman; and John the beloved disciple—with what depth of conviction and warmth of emotion could they have testified on this subject! And Martha and Mary, whose house was home to his tired feet and heart;

especially Mary, who sat rapt in his presence and anointed him with the precious fragrant spikenard—what intimate and loving witnesses would they have proved could they have spoken to that jeering crowd! Most remarkable and convincing of all, in the presence of that mocking mob, would have been the testimony of the penitent thief hanging by the side of the central Sufferer, "He saved others, for even now he has saved me."

And the same testimony would come rolling down through all these centuries, gathering into its ever-increasing volume the voices of the three thousand saved on the day of Pentecost, the converts added daily to the first church in Jerusalem, and then the multitude of voices echoing around the Mediterranean shore; the testimony of martyrs expiring in the flames or perishing in the Roman arena as they were torn to pieces by the lions; the widening circle of converts in the Roman Empire as it became pervaded with Christian faith and a Christian emperor sat upon its throne; and the swelling flood that has poured down through these ages until to-day more than a third of the human race is at least nominally Christian: all these voices whom no man could number would unite in a great shout that would go up around the world, "He saved others, for he saved us."

The unselfishness of Christ's mission shines out in this bitter sneer. Though the priests and Pharisees meant it not, yet they were saying a supremely splendid thing about Jesus when they declared that he saved others. He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister. He was the true Good Samaritan of this world. His consciousness was not of himself but of others; he was concerned not with his own comfort, but with the wounded world.

Let the glorious fact be blazed through the world that Jesus Christ saved others, his very enemies being judges; this was his blessed mission; he has fulfilled it in wide and wonderful ways, the ages resound with testimony to this truth, and he is saving others on an immensely larger scale to-day.

II. "Himself he cannot save": this was another sneer more bitter than the first, and yet also an unconscious truth more glorious than the first unwitting eulogy.

This taunt in the sense intended by the enemies of Jesus was not true. They meant by it that he was helpless upon the cross and was powerless to come down and save himself. "If thou art the Son of God," they mockingly demanded, "come down from the cross."

And so they thought they at last had Jesus in their power where he was as impotent as the

thieves hanging by his side to break away from the spikes that nailed him to the cross and where they could insult and mock him and wag their heads and rail at him, saying, "Ha! thou that destroyest the temple and buildest it in three days, save thyself, and come down from the cross."

Yet in this, also, they were utterly wrong. They knew not whom they were taunting with these vain words. Jesus had resources they little suspected, though they had seen enough of his works to know better. At the garden gate, had he not said to the rash disciple who had whipped out his sword and wounded a servant of the high priest, "Thinkest thou that I cannot beseech my Father, and he shall even send me more than twelve legions of angels?"

He who caused Roman soldiers to go backward and fall upon the ground and stilled the stormy sea and raised the dead, could he not have unsheathed the sword of his power or unloosed the lightnings of his wrath and have slain all those jeering enemies with one stroke or flash? As far as physical might was concerned he had resources of which they little dreamed and could have saved himself by destroying them.

III. But in a deeper sense he could not save himself. There were invisible moral restraints

upon him, fine spiritual bonds stronger than steel that bound him and rendered him impotent in a way they could little understand.

He was under the obligation of his redemptive love and plan and purpose to save humanity. His infinite love had led him to devote himself to this mission far back in the mysterious counsels of eternity when he entered into covenant with his Father and became the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. It was then that he devoted himself to this service in the declaration:

"Lo, I am come;
In the roll of the book it is written of me:
I delight to do thy will, O my God."

Having set his seal to this covenant and pledged his truth and love to its fulfillment, Jesus would not break it in the hour and agony of his atoning sacrifice. He said he would drink this cup, and now he was urged by his whole nature to drain it to its bitterest dregs. He had obligated himself to pay this price, and now he would not prove recreant to his word.

The very truth of God, who cannot lie, held him in its unbreakable grip. The iron spikes that nailed him to that cross were in themselves as spider threads to his power: it was the word of his truth and the mighty love of his heart that bound him to that wood with links in-

finitely stronger than iron that could not be broken. Little as they knew it his enemies spoke eternal truth when they declared, "Himself he cannot save."

IV. What would have resulted if Jesus, breaking his word and thwarting his love, had saved himself? Consequences infinitely deeper and more dreadful than human imagination could conceive would have followed.

The whole plan of redemption would have been undermined and overthrown on the spot. All the preparations for the coming of the Messiah would have been frustrated, all the work of Jesus would have been rendered vain, all his gracious words would have been nullified, all the hopes he had excited would have proved baseless delusions, and the atonement he was offering would have been cut short. The angels' song at his birth would have been hushed and the world would have had no good news of salvation; the kingdom of heaven he came to establish would have floated off as wreckage on the stream of time, and his very name would have dropped into the sea of oblivion and been utterly forgotten.

Deeper and still more terrible results would have followed. All the promises of God would have turned to falsity, a lie would have issued from the lips of the Eternal, and the great white

throne of God would have cracked asunder and rolled from its base. All the light of God's Fatherhood and love would have gone out in infinite darkness and left us as infants crying in the night; this planet would have plunged to its doom and become a wandering world; the stars of moral order and stability would have shot madly from their spheres, and the whole spiritual universe would have collapsed in wreck and chaos.

Let us forever thank and praise God that Jesus saved others, but that himself he could not save. This will be his eternal glory and the everlasting song of the redeemed.

V. Saving oneself is the curse of this world. This is the essence of selfishness which is the essence of sin. It was this lure that led Eve to make her fateful choice and that tempted Jesus in the wilderness.

Every sin that has ever been committed has had for its object and motive some form of saving the self. It is this fatal aim and endeavor that has thrown the world out of joint and set every man against his brother. It has sown the world with the seeds that have brought forth all the bitter harvests of strife and suffering and wounds and woes that have plagued it from the beginning of time. It is this that burdens and strains the social order to the point of rupture

and at times breaks out in social convulsions and great wars. If there is any one thing from which we should pray and strive to be delivered, it is from the curse of saving oneself.

But saving others is the salvation of the world. It is Christ's own work of redemption, and as we acquire the same spirit and live the same life it will expel the poison of selfishness from our souls, heal all our wounds, and give us health and holiness and happiness. It will cure the ills of the social order and compose it into harmony and love and peace.

The glory of Christ on the cross in saving others, even the penitent thief hanging by his side, and refusing to save himself, will forever be his brightest crown; and as we acquire and exhibit the same spirit it will also be our most glorious crown forever.

CHAPTER XXX

TRULY THE SON OF GOD

A Roman centurion, captain of the company of soldiers having charge of the crucifixion of Jesus, although not hostile to him in the same sense and degree as were the priests and Pharisees, yet may be numbered among those who spoke better than they knew on this fateful occasion and unconsciously put another and supreme crown on his brow.

No sooner had Jesus uttered his expiring cry than this soldier exclaimed, "Truly this was the Son of God." We must not make too much of this utterance as though the centurion meant by it all that we mean in our Christian faith when we declare that Jesus is indeed the Son of God. Nevertheless, he uttered a great truth that the inspired record caught up out of all the babel of that jeering crowd and sent it echoing down through the ages; and into these words Christian faith has ever since poured the largest meaning.

I. The Roman centurion was impressed by the behavior of Jesus on the cross with a sense of his extraordinary personality. He was used to conducting crucifixions and had learned to

look with callous indifference on the agonies of dying victims as they lingered through hours and sometimes even days of slow torture. It did not move him to pity or impress him as anything of exceptional character to see a fellow man in this dreadful extremity. Some men he had heard cry out against and curse their executioners and hurl back impotent insults at the mocking mob, and others he had seen endure the prolonged agony with stoical silence.

But there was something about this Jew on this day that caught the attention of this Roman officer and grew upon his interest. There was that strange and puzzling inscription over the top of the cross, "The King of the Jews": what did that mean? whose hand wrote it and why should it be there? Possibly the enigmatical legend seemed to the centurion to gleam with a mysterious light that appeared to mean more than was intended.

The first thing that Jesus did when the soldiers were about to nail him on the cross was to refuse the usual stupefying mixture of wine and gall that was given to victims to benumb their sense of pain. Jesus would not submit to any such alleviation of his suffering, and this must have struck the centurion as strange; probably he had never before seen this anæsthetic declined.

Stranger things still followed. The centurion must have heard the remarkable prayer of Jesus for his enemies, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." This was totally different from the terrible oaths he had often heard coming from criminals on the cross. The touching interview of the Man on the cross with his mother in which he commended her to his disciple must have deeply affected the Roman: he had never known the hard crust of that age to bear such a tender blossom before. More remarkable still was the conversation that took place among the thieves and Jesus, and the amazing conversion of one of these thieves and the promise made to him that he would enter paradise that day.

Then the centurion heard the last expiring cries of Jesus, "It is finished," and "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." The head of Jesus then fell forward and all was still. An earthquake shook the hill on which the crosses stood and terror seized the soul of the stern Roman. And through all these scenes and sayings the mysterious Man on the cross exhibited such a sublime spirit of patience and endurance and charity and forgiveness as the centurion had never seen before.

It was all these things taken together that drew from him the wondering exclamation,

"Truly this was the Son of God." Though we may not know just how much he meant by this utterance, yet it is evident that he thought Jesus was altogether unique and quite transcended any other victim he had ever seen suffer and die upon a cross.

II. Is not this utterance a fit climax and explanation of the whole life of Jesus as we now see it portrayed in the Gospels? A long and wide preparation preceded his coming, and the ages grew into readiness for him as the spring prepares the way for the sprouting of the seed. His birth became a new center of the world around which all things began to revolve. Angels sang, shepherds worshiped, a new star blazed out on the bosom of the night, and Wise Men came from afar with gifts to adore him. In his temptation he stood impregnable and master against Satan and drove him back defeated into the darkness whence he came.

In his teaching he spake as never man spake, rolling down from the Mount the Sermon whose music is still filling the world. In his mighty works he stilled the sea and fed the multitudes and raised the dead. He preached a heavenly kingdom of forgiveness and love and started it out in widening circles around the world. He burst the rocky jaws of the tomb and came forth as the Lord of life and the Master of death.

He gave his great commission to his disciples and sent them forth to teach and baptize all nations and pledged his presence with them to the end of the world.

How can we account for this Man? History and evolution, heredity and the sporadic blossoming of human ability cannot explain him. No earthly fountain or stream could shoot up such a splendid jet of genius rising so far above its source. After we have exhausted our human means of explanation he still transcends all our theories and the only adequate account of him is, "Truly this was the Son of God."

III. A specially striking feature of the character of Jesus is his universality. Every human being is born and grows within the envelope of his age and race and country, and never wholly escapes these limitations. A man of the first or the tenth or the fifteenth century could not get his head up into the nineteenth or twentieth century; and a child of an Oriental race cannot become Occidental in instinct and temperament. Heredity stamps itself upon every atom of the blood. The nearest approach to universality is seen in men of supreme genius, such as Homer and Shakespeare, who produce works of art that touch the universal human heart and have general circulation in the world. But even these men are circumscribed in their range, and their

works must not be carried too far from home or they will lose their audience, or time will render them obsolete.

But Jesus was and is the universal man. It is true he had some marks of his age and race upon him. His human knowledge was of his time, and he was a son of his race. Yet he overleaped all these boundaries and limitations. Though he sprang from the Jewish people, yet he is not a Jew and the world is hardly conscious of his lineage. He is the Son of man; the typical and representative, the ideal and perfect Man, who is equally at home among all the sons of men.

His character has none of the peculiar marks or qualities of any particular race, but has that breadth and balance, poise and power, that make it the model and paragon of all peoples: it is compounded of all virtues and graces mixed and blended in perfect proportion. And so age can never wither him or custom stale his infinite variety. He speaks on universal themes in immortal words that will never grow old. His teachings meet and satisfy the religious demands of the twentieth as of the first century and can never lose their perennial music and charm. He draws the men of every race to his side in affection and trust, devotion and service.

Compared with him the greatest geniuses are local characters and parochial schoolmasters. He looms over the world as the one universal Man who represents and typifies humanity and is at home in all ages and lands and among all peoples. "Truly this was the Son of God."

IV. Christendom is Christ writ large. It dates its calendar from his birth and organizes itself around him as its center. The Christian centuries are his lengthened shadow. This fact is a tremendous confirmation of his divine personality and power. He said he would be with his disciples unto the end of the world, and the world so far matches his promise. The face of the world, as it is being stamped by the ideals of the highest and finest civilization, is beginning to correspond with the image and superscription of Christ as the coin with the die.

It is true that there are yet many blots and shadows on the world; it is still in the twilight even in Christian lands. But the Sun has not yet fully risen; it has only swung above the Eastern horizon, and long time must elapse before it can ascend to the zenith and flood the world with midday splendor. But the dawn has reddened the East and given promise of the day.

Standing in the frame of these twenty centuries Jesus Christ is seen to be larger than any figure of our human kind, and we can only

understand him and catch some glimpse of his real nature as we exclaim, "Truly this is the Son of God."

V. The utterances concerning Christ of many modern thinkers and scholars who are either unbelievers or are only broadly Christian in their sympathies are a remarkable testimony to his person and work and show how far even the greatest skeptics are compelled to go in their appreciation if not their adoration of Jesus.

Immanuel Kant, one of the profoundest of modern thinkers, when some one in his presence instituted a comparison between his moral teachings and those of Jesus, said: "One of those names, before which the heavens bow, is sacred, while the other is only that of a poor scholar endeavoring to explain to the best of his abilities the teachings of the Master." Johann Fichte wrote: "Till the end of time, all the sensible will bow low before this Jesus of Nazareth, and all will humbly acknowledge the exceeding glory of this great phenomenon. His followers are nations and generations."

Jean Paul Richter calls Jesus "the purest of the mighty; the mightiest of the pure, who with his pierced hands raised empires from their foundations, turned the stream of history from its old channels, and still continues to rule and guide the ages." David Friedrich Strauss con-

fessed that Jesus "among the improvers of ideal humanity stands in the very first class, and remains the highest model of religion within the reach of our thought; and no perfect piety is possible without his presence in the heart."

Rousseau, instituting a comparison between Socrates and Jesus, concludes: "If Socrates lived and died like a philosopher, Jesus lived and died like a God." Renan ends his *Life of Jesus* with these words: "Whatever may be the surprises of the future, Jesus will never be surpassed. His worship will grow young without ceasing; his legend will call forth tears without end; his sufferings will melt the noblest hearts; all ages will proclaim that, among the sons of men, there is none born greater than Jesus."

Carlyle declared: "Look on our divinest symbol, Jesus of Nazareth, and his life and his biography and what followed therefrom. Higher has the human thought not yet reached: this is Christianity and Christendom, a symbol of quite perennial, infinite character, whose significance will ever demand to be anew inquired into and anew made manifest." And John Stuart Mill left in one of his posthumous essays this testimony to the world: "Religion cannot be said to have made a bad choice in pitching on this man as the ideal representative and guide of humanity; nor, even now, would it be easy,

even for an unbeliever, to find a better translation of the rule of virtue from the abstract into the concrete than the endeavor so to live that Christ would approve our life."

Charles Lamb once said to a company of friends: "If Shakespeare should enter the room we should all rise; if Jesus Christ should enter, every one would kneel."

What are these skeptical and liberal thinkers —and the list could be indefinitely extended— doing but exclaiming more or less consciously, "Truly this was the Son of God"?

Our study of these judgments of the enemies of Jesus is concluded, and the total impression they leave on the mind is that they were forced, in spite of their hostility, to bear witness to the unique and transcendent character of Jesus. Even their bitterest charges often turn out to be unwitting compliments The very vices they allege against him are virtues in our sight. All their hostile judgments are unconscious crowns of honor. His enemies being judges, he stands exalted and supreme among the sons of men. At times they rose toward the highest view of his personality and almost passed into the vision and victory of faith. Taken together, these judgments comprise a powerful body of

testimony that is a valuable confirmation of faith in Jesus as the Son of God.

If these judges with their imperfect light and unfriendly attitudes could go so far and say so much, how much clearer should be our vision and how loyal should be our sympathies and how victorious should be our faith and service as we stand in the presence of this same Jesus of Nazareth? There is one utterance out of all these judgments that can sum up our study and express our confident faith:

TRULY THIS WAS THE SON OF GOD.

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